the weekly Standard

JUNE 11, 2001

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ON THE ROAD AGAIN, ALAS
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF WALTER BENJAMIN

The famed critical theorist is widely believed to have committed suicide while fleeing the Nazis. Was he actually murdered by Stalin's agents?

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

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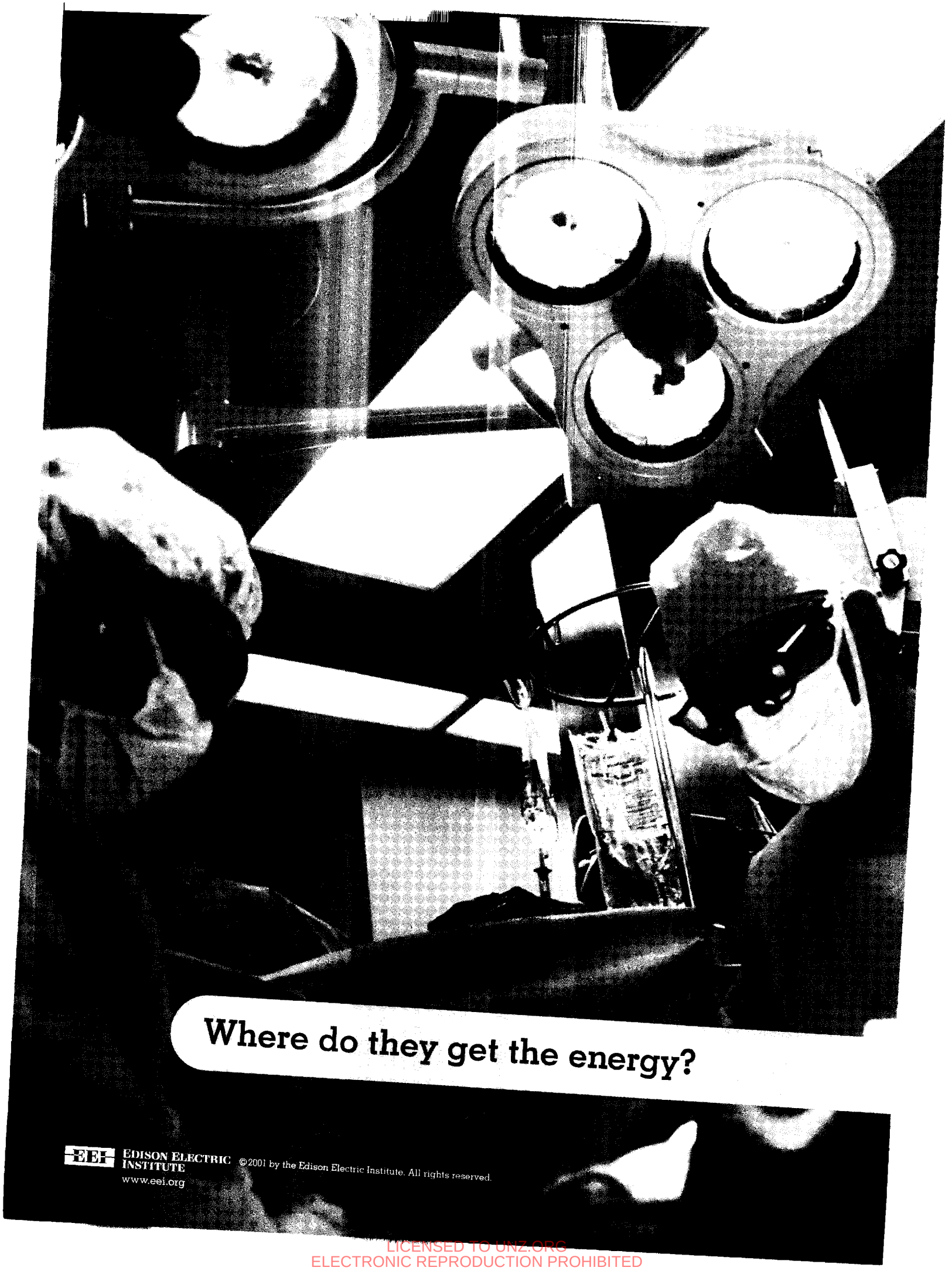

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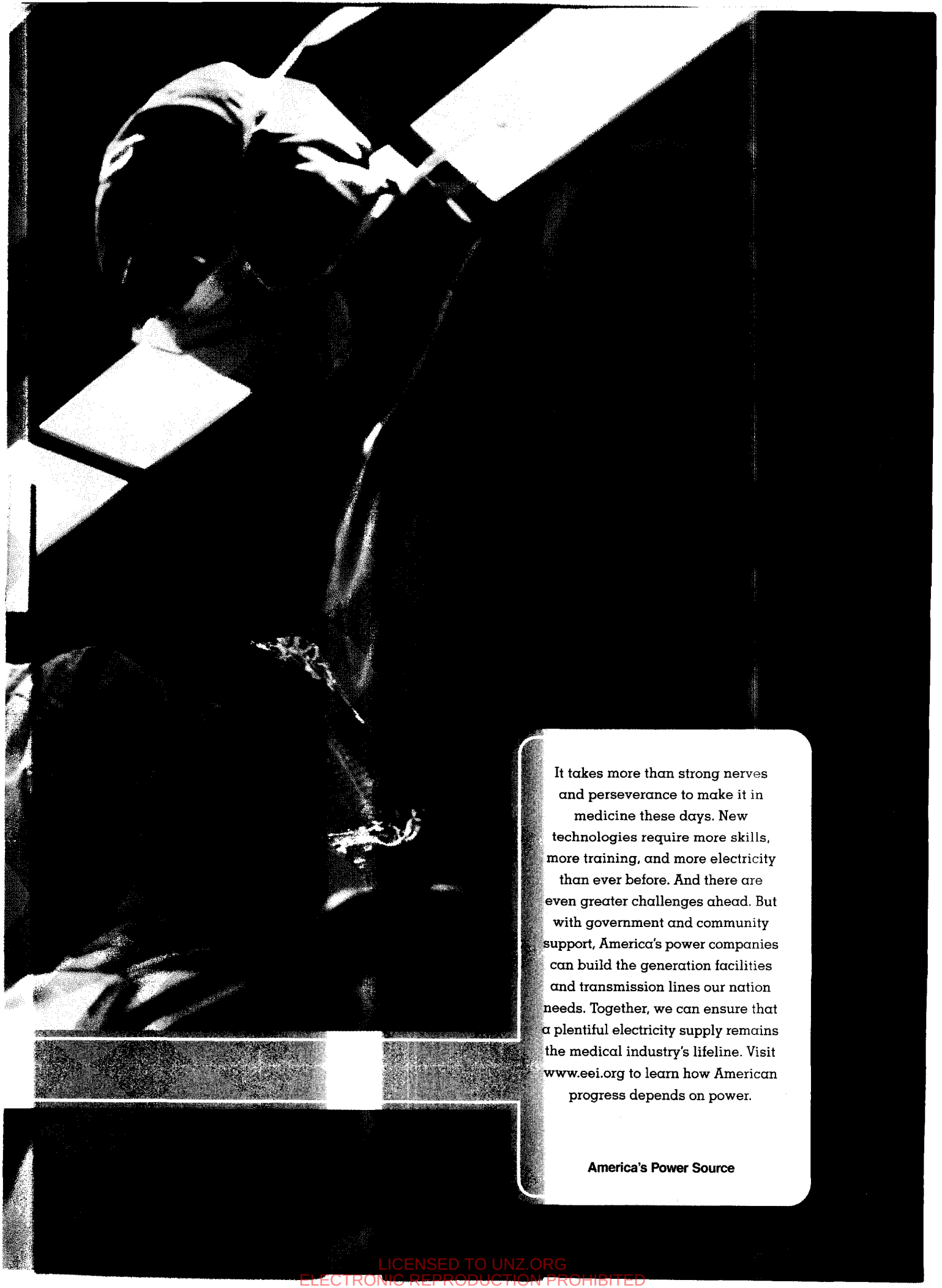

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the weekly Standard

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Horrific Days Are Here Again, cont.

Earlier this year, we fearlessly predicted that a new era was dawning in American life ("Horrific Days Are Here Again," by Andrew Ferguson, January 22, 2001). Since the government was no longer being presided over by a liberal Democrat, we reasoned, Democrats and their allies in the national press corps would suddenly discover that the country was afflicted with any number of intolerable troubles that had flourished in the 1980s but had somehow lain dormant during the Clinton years: homelessness, hunger, the trade deficit, the gap between rich and poor, and so on.

And what do you know? The moment George W. Bush removed his hand from the Bible after taking the oath of office, it seemed as though an alarm clock had gone off. Both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* gave over large sections of their front pages to the plight of the homeless. And last week the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank, issued an analysis of new data from the Congressional Budget Office that showed—you guessed it—that the income gap is widening between rich and poor.

As it happens, the green eyeshades at CBPP were never all that enamored of the Clinton administration's economic policies either, believing them to be insufficiently redistributionist. But their timing with this report is impeccable, and it will surely reinforce the press's incipient enthusiasm for the growing income gap—which now, of course, becomes George W. Bush's problem. We just wonder why it was never Bill Clinton's problem. For as the CBPP puts it: "The study shows that income gaps both between rich and poor and between the rich and the middle class widened in the 1980s and 1990s alike and reached their widest point on record in 1997."

Wait: 1997? Wasn't that right in the middle of the Clinton-era Decade of Greed? ♦

Felons? What Felons?

Last week's *Washington Post* ran a front-page story about the thousands upon thousands of Florida voters disenfranchised in last year's presidential election. The problem? Because of an error-ridden computer database that was supposed to scan for convicted felons, "at least 2,000 felons whose voting rights had been automatically restored in other states were kept off the rolls and, in many cases, denied the right to vote." The article is chock full of accounts of voters wrongly turned away at the polls. And because Bush won by only 537 votes, and 68 percent of the disenfranchised are registered Democrats, well, you can do the math.

You may wonder, on the other hand, did any felons actually get away with voting? In the *Post* piece, there is one sentence that reads, "At the same time, some felons who should not have been allowed to vote slipped through and cast ballots."

Some? According to a report in the *Palm Beach Post*, "Thousands of felons voted in the presidential election last year, despite a three-year, $3.3 million campaign by state officials to keep them off the voter rolls." A computer analysis done by the *Palm Beach Post* showed "more than 5,600 people who voted on November 7, though they appeared to perfectly match names on a statewide list of suspected felons. . . . Statewide, Broward County had the largest number of felons who voted, with nearly 1,500."

So, on balance, error-free implementation of Florida voting rules, as regards felons, would probably have reduced the total number of votes cast, and would have added to Bush's victory margin. But really, why let this little detail get in the way of another good story about the illegitimacy of the Bush presidency? ♦

Business as Usual

As noted on this page a few weeks ago, the Senate Banking Committee had reported to the floor a bill renewing the Export Administration Act, the law that regulates the sale of sensitive technologies abroad. More worried, it seems, about campaign contributions from exporters than the national security implications of what might be sold to countries like China and Iran, the committee drafted a bill giving the Commerce Department the lead in deciding what can be sold and told the Pentagon to take a hike when it comes to blocking sales it considers dangerous.

Faced with objections from senators—Shelby, Thompson, Helms, Warner, Kyl, and McCain—with responsibility and expertise in the national security area, the bill's sponsors argued that those worries were unfounded and that security concerns would be taken care of in any case by an executive order being drafted by the administration.

Well, guess what? According to a draft executive order obtained by Amy Svitak of *Defense News*, the administration is not only uninterested in addressing those concerns but actually has language in the would-be order that would explicitly discourage the Defense Department from making appeals, further reducing whatever small leverage it had left in the interagency review process.

It sure is lucky that those Clinton folks are gone—the ones conservatives used to wail about for not safeguarding critical U.S. technologies. ♦

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The Idiocy of Rural Diversity

A sudden interest in rural development has seized the media. Or maybe it's just another opportunity to add to the travails of a Bush administration nominee—in this case the would-be undersecretary of agriculture for rural development, Tom Dorr. Both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* last week followed a story from the *Des Moines Register*, reporting a statement made in 1999 by Dorr at a development conference. The nominee, an Iowa farmer, noted that the three most economically prosperous counties in rural Iowa are "very nondiverse in their ethnic background and their religious background." In case that's too circumspect for readers unfamiliar with Iowa demographics, the paper adds, "the population of the counties—Carroll, Lyon and Sioux—is predominantly white and Christian."

The *Post* provides an edited video clip of the comment on its website. But both the clip and the report of Dorr's comment are taken out of context, according to Keith Heffernan, assistant director of the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development at Iowa State University. "I've had the privilege of seeing the entire tape. Seeing it in context, it's hard for me to understand the [controversy]. . . . It came as a question and a response in a brainstorming session."

Actually, the controversy is easy to understand: Dorr's observation had the misfortune of being true, and thus particularly offensive to the "diversity" cult. Incoming Democratic Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin, who never supported the nomination of his fellow Iowan, has used the flap—and the predictable if utterly unfounded accusations of racism—as a means to delay Dorr's confirmation hearing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Senate Republican leader Trent Lott was overheard saying, "I worry about what the Democrats are going to try to do with President Bush's nominees." ♦

The Shalala Standard

We'll always remember former secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala for her appearance after that January 1998 cabinet meeting in which Clinton lied to his top officials about Monica Lewinsky. "I believe the allegations are completely untrue," said Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. "I'll second that. Definitely," said Commerce Secretary William Daley. "Third it," chimed in the very loyal Shalala. Thus we were amused when Shalala, now president of the University of Miami, was asked by *USA Today* if she would like to see her Miami Hurricanes basketball team play against Bobby Knight's Texas Tech: "I think I'll pass. I'm not a fan [of new Tech coach Knight]. I have a very high standard about the behavior of not only professors and presidents but also coaches."

Just this once, we think Bobby Knight would be perfectly justified in throwing a chair. ♦

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Casual

Home Alone

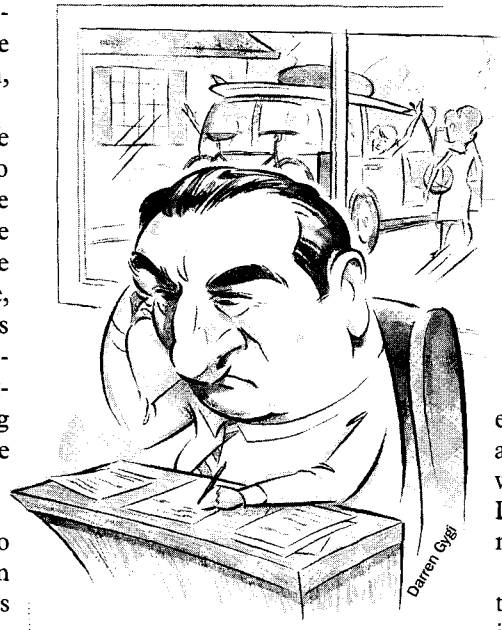
The temptation was there for years: buy a second home somewhere outside the Beltway and nest there on weekends, for long, lazy periods during the summer, at Thanksgiving and Christmas and maybe other holidays. A place beyond earshot of the Washington buzz, a place to read or watch sports on cable TV without interruption, a place to get my entire family together—that was my fondest dream. Several months ago I succumbed and bought a house (with a small swimming pool) a half block from the Atlantic Ocean in Vero Beach, Florida.

It was an impulse buy. My wife Barbara and I had never been able to agree on where our second home should be or even whether it made sense to buy one. I tilted toward the countryside around Charlottesville, Virginia, where our daughter Grace is a student at the University of Virginia. Access to UVA football, basketball, and lacrosse games was a strong selling point. Barbara favored the beach, but not Vero Beach, where my parents moved in 1972 and where my mother still lives. Too hot, too humid, Barbara insisted. We both changed our mind when we saw this house. We bought it on the spot.

Now comes what I didn't think would be the hard part: getting there. The old rule of thumb is that if the second home is more than two hours away, you'll rarely go. But that's not true in this case. People are flocking to the new place. Barbara and Grace, along with Barbara's mother, spent a week there in May, furnishing it but also getting beach time. Our daughter Sarah, son-in-law John, and granddaughter Grace have reserved the house for a week in June. Her older sister Karen and husband Allen have locked in a separate June week.

Nobody is deterred by the 16-hour drive from Washington to Vero. They're not driving. They're flying. And there are many inexpensive airline options (under $200 round trip). Particularly attractive are the direct flights each day on Spirit Airlines between Reagan National Airport in Washington (10 minutes from our house) and Melbourne, Florida (40 minutes from the second home).

It turns out the two-hour rule applies only to me. A quick Saturday-Sunday drop-by in May? Didn't happen. Memorial Day weekend? Didn't make it then either. Join my kids in Vero Beach during June? Not going to happen. I've got plans to spend the last week in June there. But I probably shouldn't get my hopes up.



What's keeping me away is a catch I didn't expect. I couldn't have purchased the place on my print journalism earnings alone. But I make a little extra from television. The catch is that while television made buying a second home possible, it's also what keeps me from getting there. The Fox News Channel pays me for showing up five days a week if humanly possible for Brit Hume's popular evening show and also taping a weekend show with Mort Kondracke. I love doing these shows. But they don't make it easy to get to Vero Beach. Print is less of an impediment, since you can work away from the office.

Of course, I need the TV money now more than ever. The expenses of a second home—mortgage, taxes, insurance, cable TV, telephone, lawn service, caretaker (important!), gardener, gated community fee—just keep piling up. And it's not like a hotel. I have to pay whether I'm there or not. I don't want to turn the house into a rental. When I do have a chance to get there, I want it to be vacant.

I *do* want to get there. Vero Beach is a lovely town with very little commercial development on the beach. My mother lives fifteen minutes away. My sister Rosa and her husband Jack, who run a missionary organization called Christian Outreach International, are even closer. Young people call the town Zero Beach, because it's so unexciting. This is why I like it. If there's nightlife, I've never heard about it and don't want to. But the Los Angeles Dodgers train in Vero each spring, playing exhibition games at a stadium whose outfield is lined with palm trees. And there's a Dodgers farm team that plays all summer in the Florida State League.

Sounds like a perfect retirement town, doesn't it? Well, I have no intention of retiring anytime soon. My model is Robert Novak, still the hardest working man (and best reporter) in journalism at age 70. Bob has a second home in Bethany Beach, Delaware, less than three hours' drive from Washington. He does plenty of TV, yet gets to Bethany all the time. I don't know how he manages this. Sure, his place is closer than Florida. But Vero is close by plane. Maybe there's a habit of leaving Washington behind that I haven't developed. But I intend to—as soon as I finish just one more TV show.

Fred Barnes

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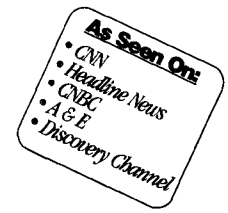

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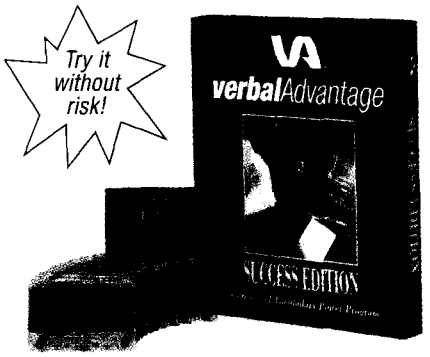

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Therapeutic Threat

It was shocking to read Christopher Caldwell's revelation regarding the behavioral therapy of a young child, considered to be normal by her first grade teacher and others ("Death by Therapy," May 28). In a country where cruel and unusual punishment is prohibited, this weird treatment defies imagination. The mystifying aspect of this horrifying disclosure is acceptance of this method as a beneficial remedy by the therapist and Candace's stepmother, who submitted her for treatment.

The slow process of the legal system will ultimately punish the transgressors, but the basic source of the monstrosity will remain unpunished and intact. If the citizens of North Carolina wish to avoid a repeat of this shameful episode, they must demand a thorough and public investigation of their family welfare system.

Roger L. Cooper
Vero Beach, FL

Christopher Caldwell's article on the death of 10-year-old Candace was moving and very disturbing. How is it that this is the first time we hear about something like this?

Poor Candace longed for her mother and siblings, seemingly natural and understandable feelings for a 10-year-old, and her mother and these "therapists" brutalized the life out of her.

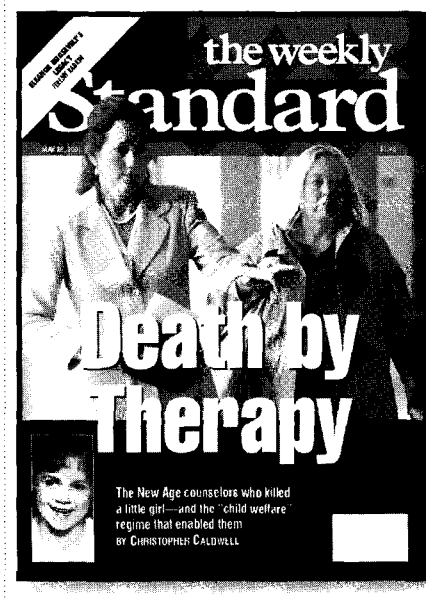
What is wrong with our society today that something as wretched as this receives no press while disciplining children who need it makes the front pages and the evening news night after night? The sight of those poor children being ripped from their parents' arms was also disturbing. Christopher Caldwell's summation of the law in North Carolina makes one wonder: Whose welfare is the state concerned for?

Charles B. Fagan Jr.
Millis, MA

I read with disgust the article by Christopher Caldwell, "Death by Therapy." My own interest and bias in this matter is based upon the fact that I am an adoptive parent of a son, now in his thirties and well functioning, who exhibited all of the symptoms of Reactive Attachment Disorder as a child. It is also based on the fact that I professionally guide parents to therapeutic resources for children with behavioral and emotional problems.

I will say nothing to defend the therapists in this case. They knew they were operating in high-risk areas and apparently did not apply proper safeguards. A child is dead. The criminal justice system acted. However, in his apparent zeal to demonize these therapists, Christopher Caldwell simply did not do his homework. A few examples:

(1) Foster Cline continued in practice with his name on the door at Evergreen Consultants and Attachment Center at



Evergreen long after the 1988 incident Caldwell alleges. (2) Foster Cline did not originate "holding therapy" and never claimed to have done so. During the 1980s he arguably was its most influential proponent. (3) The suggestion that the liberal press, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*, skipped this story out of liberal bias is discordant with the undeniable fact that the promotion of holding therapy by Cline was an expression of his ultra-conservative politics and, to a lesser degree, his Christian faith. While the accused therapists broke with Cline, his influence on the thinking behind this tragic event is undeniable. In the '80s and early '90s he was a whipping boy for liberals regarding views on childcare and therapy. I do not believe the issues in this case were actually politically driven at all, but the thinking that went into the actions of these therapists have their roots in ultra-conservative ideology. The "new age" attribution was almost humorous. (4) The diagnosis of Reactive Attachment Disorder is fully accepted in traditional psychiatric circles. (5) While I do not have personal knowledge of the credentials Connell Watkins holds, simple research would show that it is standard in most states to permit persons holding the degree Caldwell attributes to Watkins to practice psychotherapy independently. I refer to the Master of Social Work degree (MSW) that is highly respected as a clinical degree. (6) No one genuinely familiar with this case would seriously suggest that the therapists lacked remorse over the death of this child. (7) The description of Attachment Disordered children exhibiting out-of-control behaviors primarily challenging a primary caretaker while being superficially engaging and charming with others is beyond serious dispute.

Caldwell is correct that the holding and rebirthing therapies advocated by Cline, Watkins, and others have never been scientifically validated; however, there is significant anecdotal reporting of great progress in applying these therapies to Attachment Disordered children. Based on that, it seems irresponsible not to continue to research the applicability of therapies involving physical contact for these children.

Keep in mind that the Attachment Disordered children of today are likely to be the sociopaths and psychopaths of tomorrow if appropriate intervention does not occur. True conservative, pro-life, pro-adoption, anti-crime advocates should be screaming for serious study of these methods to continue, not sabotaging them with sensational and inaccurate journalism.

Thomas J. Croke
Latrobe, PA

Christopher Caldwell responds: My thanks to Roger Cooper and Charles Fagan for their thoughtful letters. As for Thomas Croke's willful misreading of the article, let me address the points he thinks he's making.

On Cline: "Rage reduction therapy"

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was pioneered by California autism specialist Robert Zaslow. But the course of treatment developed at the Attachment Center in Evergreen—which included "holding therapy," known less euphemistically as "intrusive restraint"—was Foster Cline's own.

I don't "allege" an incident of abuse of an 11-year-old child under Cline's general supervision in 1988. The incident is documented by both the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners and the Colorado Psychiatric Society. Cline may have kept his shingle up for a time, but he agreed to stop practicing rage reduction therapy and later moved to Idaho.

I did not know that Cline was a political conservative, but cannot see why Croke considers it of the slightest importance.

Nowhere did I "suggest" (nor do I believe) that "liberal bias" is the reason the Candace Newmaker case was so little covered in the press.

On Watkins: Connell Watkins was never a licensed clinical social worker. Colorado, however, is one of the least regulated states on matters of psychotherapy, and Watkins practiced "attachment therapy" for years with the degree Croke describes: a Master's in [Non-Clinical] Social Work. But Watkins's license had lapsed, her conduct was condemned by a former head of the North Carolina state association of Licensed Clinical Social Workers as "extremely disturbing," and she was convicted on April 20 of unlawful practice of psychotherapy.

Croke is wrong that "no one genuinely familiar with this case would seriously suggest that the therapists lacked remorse over the death of this child." Many did. I quoted a few of them.

On RAD: Reactive Attachment Disorder has been listed since 1987 in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, along with many other ill-understood diseases, syndromes, and disorders whose very existence is controversial. To say that RAD is "fully accepted in traditional psychiatric circles" is preposterous.

So is the idea of a behavioral disorder that flares up only when its alleged sufferer is in the presence of his "primary caretaker" (as Croke states in point 7) and goes immediately into remission when someone else enters the room.

Even if I accepted (which I do not) Croke's assertion that "the Attachment Disordered children of today are likely to be the sociopaths and psychopaths of tomorrow if appropriate intervention does not occur," I would still reject the notion that "significant anecdotal reporting" (from whom, by the way?) justifies pressing ahead with "therapies involving physical contact for these children," as Croke so delicately puts it.

A Second Opinion

My thoroughly abused body is sweating, wheezing, and trembling already after reading Andrew Ferguson's deft surgeon general's warning about Dr. Kenneth Cooper ("Bush's Exercise Guru," May 7). Luckily, Dr. Cooper's name is not the only one being "buzzed" about these days. I note that Charles Krauthammer suggested putting Leon R. Kass, M.D., Ph.D., on this "unequaled soapbox" as surgeon general. I don't know what Kass's stance is on spinning classes or anti-oxidants. But there is no one who can speak as gently, firmly, and thoughtfully as Dr. Kass about the truly important medical dilemmas facing this nation (e.g., cloning, gene therapy, euthanasia). We're all going to die, no matter how many aerobics classes we take. The key, as Leon Kass clearly observes, is not only to live healthily, but to live well.

Albert Keith Whitaker
Chicago, IL

The Real Mallarmé

In "Pagans & Moderns" (May 28), Algis Valiunas quotes Robert Calasso: "In Mallarmé, the material of poetry is brought back, with unprecedented and as yet unrepeated determination, to mental experience." This Calasso calls "absolute literature," and Valiunas adds that it "pays no obeisance to the petty idols of social usefulness."

Plainly, the term "mental" is very inadequate in this context as we know from the master Symbolist, who wrote "Song springs from an inborn source: before any concept" ("On Poe") and wrote a friend, "One must think with one's whole body."

So, Valiunas's remark that "The literary forms that tradition had hallowed now yield to inspired improvisation" won't do. No one has been less improvisational than Mallarmé. A far cry, indeed, from Lautréamont and the surrealists ("automatic writing") and the others Valiunas lumps together.

Robert Greer Cohn
Menlo Park, CA

Days Of Dodge Ball

It was with much enjoyment that I read your recent piece concerning the banning of dodge ball ("Parody," May 21). The parody's reference to "differently abled" children (now the politically correct way of referring to disabled people, I suppose) in this context was especially amusing for me.

I am disabled by cerebral palsy, and as a child growing up in the late fifties and early sixties, I attended a special school strictly for handicapped children. Once a week we had physical education, more commonly called gym, and guess what? We played dodge ball! It must have been quite a sight to see kids on crutches, in leg braces, and in wheelchairs, hobbling and wheeling about to avoid being the target. I'm sure kids fell and banged up an elbow or a knee here or there, and that the more severely disabled kids were pretty easy marks for the less disabled (horror of horrors in today's world, for sure), but, as I think back, this was probably very therapeutic for most of us, and more important, it was just plain fun. Fortunately for us, no one worried about breeding aggression, and self-esteem hadn't been discovered yet.

Michael Pence
Philadelphia, PA

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the weekly Standard

The Cart Before the Law

Last week the Supreme Court assumed its usual stance astride the statute books, took a mighty swing—and shanked a particular federal law so far into the trees that it will likely never be found again. At least, not the way that law was originally written.

As you've no doubt heard, the Court ruled that the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) grants golfer Casey Martin the right to use a motorized cart at PGA Tour events. Martin suffers from Klippel-Trenaunay-Weber Syndrome, a ghastly congenital defect of the vascular system, which in his case prevents the circulation of blood from his right leg to his heart. He is in constant pain, his already withered leg continues to atrophy, and every step he takes on that leg involves a risk of hemorrhage or bone fracture. Despite all this, Martin remains an exceptional golfer—provided he is allowed to ride down each course's fairways, and to and from its greens and tees. Denied that assistance, and forced to walk, he is unable to play the sport at all.

Regulations governing the PGA's elite events—the "hard card" of professional American golf—had long obliged competitors to walk the entire length of each tournament. It was this "walking rule" that was nominally at issue in the Supreme Court's decision. Title III of the ADA guarantees a disabled "individual" the "full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, [and] advantages" offered by any "place of public accommodation." The law specifies twelve categories of public accommodation to be covered by this guarantee, one of which is a "place of exercise or recreation" like, for example, a "golf course." And to effect the guarantee, ADA requires anyone who "leases" or "operates" such a "place" to modify all "policies, practices, or procedures" that might interfere with a disabled person's enjoyment there. Unless, that is, "the entity can demonstrate that making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature" of its enterprise.

Last week the high court determined that exemptions from the PGA Tour's walking rule, for disabled but otherwise qualified players like Casey Martin, would *not* fundamentally alter the game of golf. Consequently, for as long as he remains on that tour, Martin is now assured the use of his cart. Which may or may not be the correct result, so far as golf is concerned.

On the one hand, the sport's governing body in America, the United States Golf Association, argues that the uniform walking rule imposed a crucial test of athleticism on tournament professionals: that a large part of what always made a true golf champion was his ability to shoot well even after legging it for twenty-plus miles over four days and 72 holes. A majority of American golf pros apparently concur, and further worry that selective enforcement of the walking rule will distort their business with all sorts of subtle competitive advantages and disadvantages. On the other hand, there are a fair number of famous golf names who side with Casey Martin. As do the nation's editorial pages, whose writers must spend a great deal of time on the links, for all the confidence with which they have welcomed the Supreme Court's ruling—and contemptuously dismissed the significance of walking to the Meaning of Golf.

Here at THE WEEKLY STANDARD, we do not pretend to know what is the Meaning of Golf. And we will be as thrilled as anyone should Casey Martin, even with court-ordered assistance, someday struggle his way to a victory on the PGA Tour. It will be an achievement with but a single parallel in the history of golf, as we understand it: Ben Hogan's triumph at the 1950 U.S. Open, while still recovering from a near-fatal car accident, with his legs wrapped ankle to crotch in elastic to minimize swelling, and barely able to stand up. Rules (then) being rules, Hogan was not allowed the use of a cart. But still, in human terms, Casey Martin will demonstrate real bravery every time he plays, win or lose, for the rest of his life.

Whether Martin is entitled to a waiver of the PGA's walking rule by the Americans With Disabilities Act as approved by Congress and signed into law by the first President Bush, however, seems to us an entirely different question. And the answer to that question, it further seems to us, is no—so obviously and completely no, in fact, as to

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render the Supreme Court's contrary assertion last week virtually inexplicable. It is not every day that the nation's highest court directly defies common sense, plain statutory language, and the stated intentions of Congress to arrive at an interpretation of federal law. And it is a sorry day, indeed, when only two justices of that court, *and no one else in any branch of government*, sees fit to complain about it.

Not at issue before the Supreme Court in the Martin case was a set of employment-related provisions in the ADA known as Title I. Title I bars discrimination against disabled workers by any employer with a larger than fifteen-person regular workforce. No one has ever disputed that Title I's protections do not extend to independent contractors who provide irregular services to such an employer. And a federal district court has held that Martin's status with the PGA Tour is the legal equivalent of an independent contractor—so no remedy could ever be available to him through Title I. But that same district court, affirmed by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, has also held, as a threshold matter, that Title III of the ADA, while not reaching salaried employees, *does* cover independent contractors like Casey Martin.

All by itself, this ruling, which the Supreme Court last week declined to review (and so let stand), reduces federal disability law to incoherence. Both simple logic and unbroken legal tradition suggest that those parts of civil rights statutes that address public accommodations (like Title III) are meant to apply to customers, not employees or service contractors. The Ninth Circuit has subverted this principle in the Martin case, and hasn't even managed to do it consistently, so that, for example, ADA now protects disabled contractors working for a small public institution, but doesn't protect that institution's actual employees. Needless to say, there is no evidence that Congress wished or expected its landmark disabilities law to function this way.

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Nor is there any rational justification for the ground on which the Supreme Court, for its part, has ultimately ruled in Casey Martin's favor. Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for all his colleagues except Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, declares that bothering over Martin's asserted status as an independent contractor of the PGA Tour is altogether unnecessary. This, he further declares, because it is "entirely appropriate" simply to classify American professional athletes like Martin as "clients or customers" of the events in which they are paid to perform. While another set of "clients or customers"—the in-person and television audience—pays to watch them do it. It is a commonplace, of course, that professional sports occupy a unique place in the nation's economic and cultural life. But this, as Justice Scalia's pungent dissent puts it, is "quite incredible."

Shortly before the new law was finally approved in 1990, the House and Senate issued a joint "conference committee" report clarifying that the ADA was "not intended to disturb the legitimate and reasonable disciplinary rules and procedures established and enforced by professional sports leagues." Last week, the Supreme Court blithely ignored that clear instruction with respect to one professional sport—by presuming to resolve whether the PGA's hard-card walking rule does or does not represent the mystical essence of golf. In so doing, the majority justices invited lower courts in the federal judiciary to begin inspecting substantive rules of competition in every other professional sport, as well. Those organizations which filed briefs on behalf of Casey Martin give some flavor of what's ahead: the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, and the Dwarf Athletic Association of America, to name just three.

That sports-obsessed America has expressed so little nervousness about the brave new world forecast by *PGA Tour, Inc.* v. *Casey Martin* is a bit surprising. That official Washington has proved similarly unconcerned about the ruling—again, no one in either Congress or the Bush administration has uttered even a peep—is more than a bit surprising. It is genuinely shocking. With the advent of a Democratic Senate, it is widely assumed that questions of constitutional interpretation will provoke heated and predominantly partisan debate about the president's current and future judicial nominees. Those questions are important and that debate will be welcome. But the *Martin* decision raises an equally important question: The federal judiciary, at the highest levels, has proved willing to subject even relatively simple legislative enactments to Orwellian reinterpretation. This is neither a Republican nor a Democratic problem. Members of Congress of both parties who claim to be our representatives in the enterprise of self-government should work to ensure that the problem gets fixed.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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After over fifty years of the bizarre notion of not recognizing the "existence" of the State of Israel, after eight years of the Oslo "peace process", and after being offered unbelievably generous conditions to bring an end to the long and bloody conflict, the Palestinians have rejected those terms and have instead chosen to continue on their path of violence. They have erupted in the bloody Al-Aksa Intifada, which so far has caused hundreds of dead and thousands of injured. The question can be raised whether peace with the Palestinians is possible at all.

What are the facts?

The Root of the Middle East Conflict. Many observers of the Middle East believe that the root of the area's conflict lies in the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews -- that peace could come to the area if that conflict could be resolved. And the way it should be resolved, these observers believe, is by Israel's yielding its heartland, Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), and the Gaza Strip for the creation of a Palestinian state and by returning the Golan Heights to Syria. But after the late Hafez Assad's brusque refusal to accept the return of the Golan (because it would not include the shores of the Sea of Galilee), and after Arafat's contemptuous refusal of Barak's generous offer, it is clear that the Arabs do not want peace -- they want confrontation and the destruction of Israel.

People also overlook that the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews long predates Israel's control over the administered territories, that Arab-Arab wars are endemic in the area, and that Israel would be defenseless and at the mercy of its implacable enemies if it were to yield control of these strategic territories without a full peace -- not just with the Palestinians, but with *all* the Arabs.

"Real peace . . . can only happen through a complete change of mentality, policies, and historical ambitions in the Arab-Iranian block."

The Menace of Islamic Fundamentalism. The clamor for yielding strategic territories to the Arabs is the first step in the immutable Arab attempt to liquidate Israel altogether. Because, certainly, Israel, with its fewer than 6 million inhabitants, compared to almost 300 million Arabs, and with its less than 10,000 square miles, compared to almost 5 million square miles of the Arab countries, cannot possibly be a threat to peace or a menace to the Arabs. And reducing the territory of Israel from 10,000 square miles to 7,000 square miles would not seem likely to bring peace one step closer. The main reason that real peace is so difficult to attain is the political and cultural context of the Middle East, which is dominated by the menace of Islamic fundamentalism. By the tenets of this fundamentalism, Israel's size is not of importance; it is the very existence of Israel that, to fundamentalist believers, is an intolerable offense, an unacceptable insult to Islam. The fundamentalist Moslems -- Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and all the others -- do not aim at peace with Israel or the recovery of some territory. Their publicly declared aim is the destruction of the Jewish State. On more than one occasion, the Islamic Jihad has stated: "[This is] definite and irrevocable . . . We will be satisfied with nothing but the destruction of Israel."

Real Peace Must Be Global. The current upheavals in Israel, in its administered territories, and in the areas that Israel has transferred to the Palestinian Authority, may give the impression that peace would come to the region if Israel would come to terms with the aspirations of the Palestinians. But that is impossible, because the destruction of Israel is the stated purpose of the Palestinians, as embedded in their never-revoked Covenant. But even if it were achievable, peace would not come about, because such a peace would be a non-global one. The most fervent enemies of Israel -- Iran, Iraq, and including even Egypt (with which Israel is technically at peace) -- have as their principal foreign policy goal the destruction of Israel, a goal that would not be altered even if Israel acceded to every wish of the Palestinians. Those Arab statesmen who have tried to come to terms with the Jewish State have invariably found a terrible end. King Abdullah of Transjordan was assassinated by the rejectionists, so was President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and so was President Bashir Gemayel of Lebanon, all of whom envisioned peaceful cooperation and co-existence with Israel. Every Arab leader knows that any overt declaration of wishing to make real peace and to co-exist and to cooperate with Israel is a suicidal death sentence.

We all want peace, of course, especially the Israelis, who have been almost constantly embattled since the foundation of their state. But because of Arab-Islamic fundamentalism that cannot tolerate a Jewish presence on any part of "Arab territory", and because any peace arrived at would be non-global, such real peace would seem difficult to attain at this time. One hopes that real peace -- the Arabs' acceptance of a Jewish State and peaceful co-existence and cooperation with it -- will come eventually. But it can only happen through a complete change of mentality, policies, and historical ambitions in the Arab-Iranian block, abandonment of fanatic fundamentalism, and change to genuine democracy. And that may well take a very long time. In the meantime, Israel must keep up its guard and cannot afford to yield strategic territory, without which it would be vulnerable.

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Cheap Hawks

The Bush administration's surprisingly stingy defense spending request.

BY TOM DONNELLY

THE ANNOUNCEMENT last week that the Bush administration would seek a supplemental appropriation of $5.6 billion for defense for this fiscal year confirmed the fears of many on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon: Bush's commitment to rebuilding and reforming the military is less than anticipated or advertised.

"It's better than zero," one defense committee staffer shrugged in discussing the request. But not much better. More than half the supplemental simply makes good on military pay and health benefits and operations already committed. The request contains almost nothing for modernization. Indeed, it slows down development of the Marine Corps's V-22 Osprey to help cover these other expenses. Representative Ike Skelton, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, commented that the supplemental would not even "cover the waterfront," but would leave the military short of money at the end of the fiscal year.

It didn't have to be this way. President Bush made rebuilding U.S. military strength a theme of his campaign, and he entered office with broad congressional support for increased defense spending. There was a consensus on Capitol Hill that combat readiness was slipping, weapons systems wearing out, and the quality of military life substandard. Before the inauguration, a bipartisan delegation journeyed to Austin to pledge to support the president if he moved rapidly to address these pressing problems.

The administration turned its back, arguing that any spending increases for defense should be subordinated to tax cuts. The White House even blindsided Vice President Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, announcing early in February that it would not immediately seek a 2001 defense supplemental. Spokesman Ari Fleischer portrayed the decision as "a signal of fiscal discipline" and an assertion of civilian control over the military. Defense hawks were told to wait for the results of Secretary Rumsfeld's much-heralded strategic review of defense requirements. This was to be a rapid but thorough reconsideration of American strategy and forces, with an eye toward "transforming" the armed services for new missions and emerging technologies. The review was to be the basis for additional defense requests—the administration was willing to "spend more wisely."

But the Rumsfeld review shows every sign of becoming a fiasco. The process has been scattered from the start, with dozens of panels looking at a wide range of issues, but no overarching guidance. Experts looking at strategy are out of synch with those considering the possibilities for transformation; the Joint Staff, the service chiefs, Congress, and the defense industry have largely been excluded from the process.

Recently, Rumsfeld himself has started to walk away from the review. In a series of interviews he has distanced himself from the work of the panels, including the keystone strategy panel. "The strategy paper is the strategy paper, and it doesn't mean it's the strategy," he helpfully explained. He has indicated his displeasure with the traditional "two-war standard"—American forces should be capable of winning two nearly simultaneous large wars—that has long provided the benchmark for sizing the military. But he has suggested no alternative. In meetings with Congress, the secretary has said only that he wants to "prepare for the unexpected," and has passed out lists of

Donald Rumsfeld

Illustration by Drew Friedman

Tom Donnelly is deputy executive director of the Project for the New American Century.

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historical surprises and the introduction to a book about Pearl Harbor.

In what looks like an admission that the review process has been a failure, Rumsfeld now says he will roll his review into the formal Quadrennial Defense Review. This is the congressionally mandated review of defense planning—the very vehicle that Rumsfeld's review was supposed to replace. And rather than beginning with the administration's guidance, around which a defense program can be built, it now seems that a truncated quadrennial-review process will itself be expected to answer fundamental questions about the nation's military posture.

Against this pattern of confusion and indecision, the 2001 defense supplemental is compelling evidence of Rumsfeld's weakness and the president's uncertain commitment to a defense build-up. Last week, Rumsfeld dispatched aides to Capitol Hill to justify the lateness of the supplemental. One aide confessed, "The administration had to see what the amount of the tax bill would be to determine what was left over for defense."

In placing such emphasis on its tax cut, the administration may have squandered its opportunity to rebuild and reform the military. Not only is the supplemental request less than the Pentagon needs, but any increase in the 2002 budget appears certain to be modest—$12 billion or less, perhaps not enough to cover shortfalls in pay, benefits, and operations. Moreover, the Republicans' loss of the Senate will make defense increases harder to push through Congress. Already, incoming Senate Budget Committee chairman Kent Conrad has threatened to make "defense the first casualty in this year's budget battle." Senator Carl Levin, now to head the Armed Services Committee, predicted that Democrats "won't support major increases in defense spending."

Nor will the Democrats be more favorably disposed next year, when the administration finally reveals the full scope of its defense plans. By the time the fiscal year 2003 budget arrives on Capitol Hill next spring, the Democrats' fight to regain the House as well as the Senate will have begun. Should they sweep the fall elections, Bush's chance to rebuild the armed forces may turn out to have slipped away.

George W. Bush repeatedly pilloried the Clinton administration for its neglect of the military. "Help is on the way," Vice President Cheney vowed. Bush appointees in the Pentagon excuse their tardiness with the depredations of the Clinton years. The military, they say, is in worse shape than they ever imagined. But their shock sounds contrived in light of Bush campaign rhetoric and the many warnings issued by the Defense Department itself in recent years. In preparation for the upcoming quadrennial review, Clinton administration officials estimated that the military needed $30 billion to $50 billion more per year; the outgoing secretary of the Air Force pegged the figure at $100 billion annually.

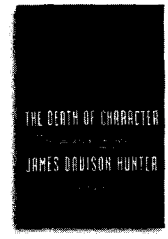
While there is no doubt that the Bush administration inherited a Pentagon beset with problems, it is on the verge of compounding rather than remedying them. The administration is even bungling the issue that is the centerpiece of its defense reform program, ballistic missile defenses.

This was the symbol of the administration's commitment to reshaping the military for the future. As early as last December, one of Rumsfeld's top advisers said, "You can judge how serious we are when it comes to fixing defense by whether we add money for missile defense in the [2001] supplemental." By this measure—the supplemental contains no missile defense funding—they aren't serious.

Indeed, missile defense has become a leading indicator of the gap between Bush defense rhetoric and reality. Recent efforts to enlist support on Capitol Hill and in NATO capitals have flopped as a result of the administration's inability to define a missile-defense strategy, architecture, program, or cost. And opposition to the plan is certain to unite Democrats: From Senate majority leader Tom Daschle on down, they are vehemently opposed to any system that would violate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty—which is to say any missile defense of strategic value.

Fading hopes for rebuilding and reforming American armed forces now rest with President Bush himself. What he might have had for the asking in February he will now find difficult to secure. Half the battle will be in his own administration. Thus far, it appears that Rumsfeld and his lieutenants cannot count on the backing of their commander-in-chief against the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies.

In the 2000 campaign, Bush charged the Clinton administration with creating a military that had to report itself "not ready for duty." Unless the president acts decisively to increase defense budgets, spurs the Pentagon to develop a clear strategy for maintaining American military strength, and leads the way on missile defense, the same report may have to be issued on his watch. ♦



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Thank You, Mr. Jeffords

The party-hopping senator may have done Bush a big favor. BY NOEMIE EMERY

DON'T LOOK NOW, but Senator James M. Jeffords, denounced in some circles as a cad and a turncoat, may have secured a second term for George W. Bush. He has saved Bush from his friends; taken key issues away from the Democrats; and given Bush the chance to focus on long-term objectives, instead of short-term and partisan gains. Just as the rightward pressure of a Republican Congress kept Democrat Bill Clinton safely in channel, somewhat to the left of center, which is where most of the country wanted to see him, so the leftward pressure of a Democratic Senate will keep George W. Bush safely in channel, somewhere to the right of center, which is where most of the country wants *him*.

A Democratic Senate deprives the Left of its optimum issues. "No way will there be drilling" in the Alaska wilderness, says Barbara Boxer. No way too will this now be a large issue for future elections, and the environment is the one thing largely responsible for driving down Bush's favorable ratings. No one who came near a television set in the last several months could escape the deluge of stories about the rape of the land, the rape of the wilderness, the rape of the courts by fierce right-wing judges—all guaranteed to whip the liberal base into frenzies, and stir tremors in undecided soccer moms. If the land is unraped, if the courts are no more than gently molested by the kind of judges who pass through a post-Jeffords Senate, then the Left will have run out of red flags to wave in front of people who would otherwise be happy enough with a Bush administration that managed to skirt catastrophe on the economic and the foreign fronts. Since Democrats tend to run mainly on fear, this is no small thing. And because this will no longer be an option, Bush will be freed from the temptation to push through conservative hobbyhorses on narrow party-line votes. This moves him closer to his real objective: the longer, harder, more complicated job of building a broad, stable, center-right governing party that provides the basis for long-term conservative rule after he himself has passed from the scene.

Let us look closely at the perils and promise of what Bush is attempting to do. He is trying to build a governing party after a decade of failed "mandates" (in 1992 and 1994). There are no strong political winds in any direction; the public has repeatedly made clear that it trusts neither party; and the last election ended in an utter and absolute tie. This is the situation exposed by the flip of the Senate. "While unitary government describes the formal situation of the national government, it does not capture the reality," wrote James W. Ceaser and Andrew E. Busch in *The Perfect Tie*, a book on the 2000 election published just before Jeffords's defection. "Republicans clearly have no reason to apologize for their precarious 'control' of the government, but the truth is that the results of 2000 have nothing in common with the other moments of achieving unitary government . . . when at the minimum a claim of a 'party' victory could be plausibly entertained."

Bush perhaps had no choice but to claim a mandate, but the truth was closer to being that he had a mandate to build one, which in fact he was trying to do. Since the end of the Reagan era, it had become clear to some people in both political parties that a governing majority around the idea of a small, activist government was attainable, and available to both major parties; the Republicans having to prove they were sincere about "activist," and the Democrats having to prove they were sincere about "small." Bush understood this better than Gore, which is the reason he now is the president. The fact that he, and his ideas, are still works in progress is the reason his edge was so narrow.

George W. Bush is the second president to have sensed this potential, and he may be the first one to bring the thing off. Bill Clinton was elected in 1992 partly on the idea that he could transform his party, occupy the center, and build a center-left coalition that could dominate the next generation in politics. But he lost his one chance for his elusive "legacy" when he deferred instead to his wife and his party's liberal activists, pushing a plan for a large-scale expansion of government for which there was no wish beyond his own base. Smacked in the face by the midterm elections, he retrenched, practiced the tactics of self-preservation, and saved himself for his next reelection, while doing nothing to salvage his party. As he skipped nimbly along on his small, dopey programs, his party was sinking around him, hemorrhaging seats on the state and congressional levels.

A brilliant tactician, Clinton in fact had a poor sense of strategy, and so for that matter did Gore. While Gore flailed away at differing themes and tried out a variety of personae, Bush steadily pursued his strategic endeavor, understanding that, with the Cold War over and the wedge issues vanished, there were new constituencies to be gone after, and new issues to be raised. His campaign was a two-year exercise in building a party, drawing in people not always Republican by way of issues appealing to Democrats, on which he put a conservative spin:

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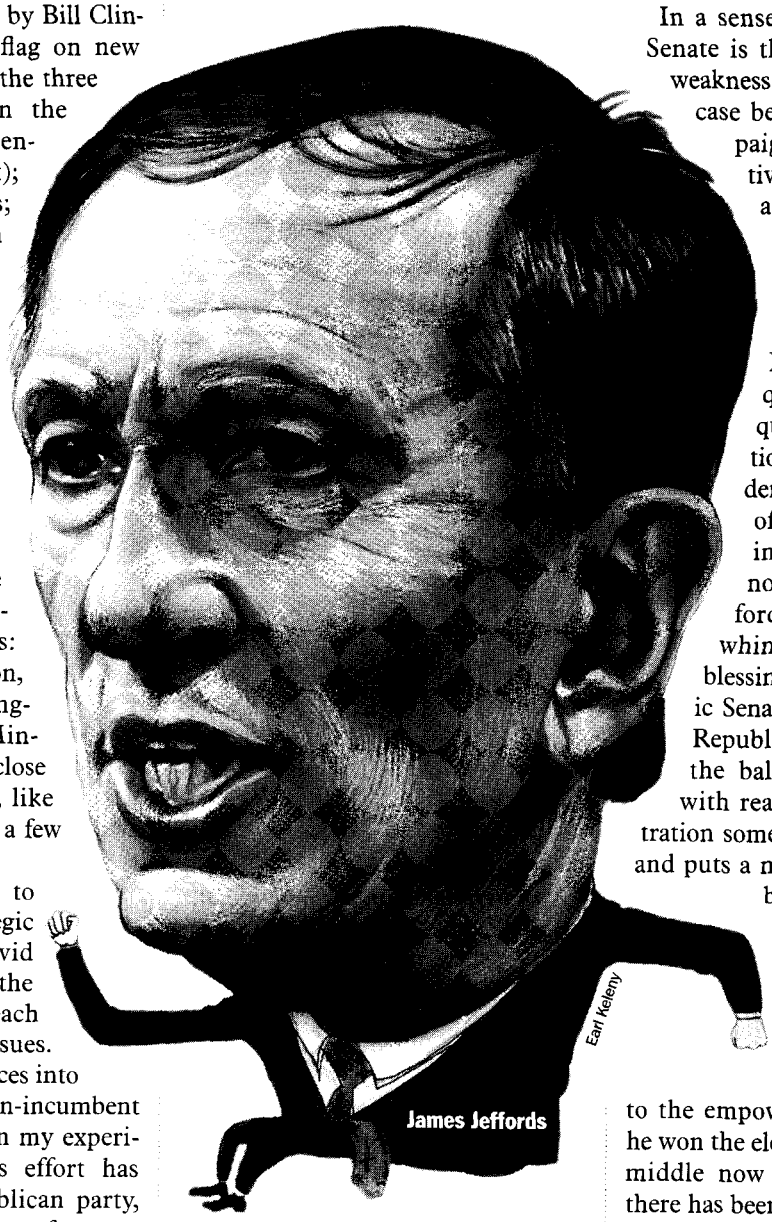
education reform through school choice and accountability; poverty relief through private and faith-based institutions; Social Security reform through privatization; Medicare reform through market forces and consumer choice.

In 2000, Bush did not go quite as far as he wanted, but he made a good start on his ongoing project, winning back territory once held by Bill Clinton, and planting his flag on new ground. He did well in the three main swing groups in the country, winning independents (47 to 45 percent); winning white Catholics; winning the group with some college experience (the single cohort most watched by the pollsters) by 51 to 45 percent. He won working families. He won white women, barely. He won all income groups except the two lowest, and all education levels except the extremes. The red-and-blue map concealed some near-misses: He came close in Oregon, Wisconsin, and Washington; close in Maine, Minnesota, and Iowa; very close in New Mexico, which, like Florida, was decided by a few hundred votes.

"Bush has managed to achieve two of his strategic goals," observed David Broder two days before the election, citing his reach both in states and on issues. "He has put more resources into more places than any non-incumbent presidential candidate in my experience. Win or lose, his effort has strengthened the Republican party, and positioned it to compete for votes where before it had only a foothold." Since the election, Bush has continued these efforts, through the Republican National Committee and the Republican Governors Association; through Hispanic outreach; through massive outreach to Catholics (and others in the religious community) that could put Michigan and Pennsylvania in his reach in 2004. This has the makings of a stable majority that could govern the country for years.

What might derail this strategy? Irrational arrogance. Exuberant hubris. And the spending of capital not yet in the bank. For many years, conservative true believers have been complaining loudly about the profound irritation of dealing with RINOs (Republicans in Name Only), and wondering why they had to bother with them in the first place. Well, now they know why. It is ironic, and perhaps expected, that the people who raged the most about Jeffords are now most irate that he's split. According to most polls, the percentage of the electorate that defines itself as "conservative" maxes out at around 35 percent. Until and unless they find some way to bump this up to the 50s, conservatives will have to cut deals with the less pure in spirit if they wish to get anything done.



James Jeffords

In a sense, then, the shift of the Senate is the fruit of conservative weakness: If they had made their case better, run stronger campaigns, found more attractive candidates, their Senate majority would have been more substantial, and Jeffords's complaints would have been his own business. Elections have consequences. One consequence of the 2000 election is a Republican president. Another was the loss of four Republican seats in the Senate, which was not the fault of Jim Jeffords. So live with it; stop whining; and see it for the blessing that it is. A Democratic Senate breaks the illusion of Republican dominance, brings the balance of power in line with reality, gives the administration something to counterpunch, and puts a much-needed rein on its base.

Bush can now go back to rebuilding his party—with the knowledge the fringe is in hand. He should move not to the left, but to the empowerment ground where he won the election, where the radical middle now lives. For some time, there has been a muted rivalry in policy circles between the New Democrats and the empowerment wing of the Republican party, as to which side will capture the flag of small, active government and bend the agenda its way. Now, as Bush starts to get with the program, there are signs the liberal Third Way has maxed out. First

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came Bush himself, then Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, both upending left-centrists in times of great prosperity, causing Michael Barone to note that both Gore and Clinton failed to break 50 percent in optimum circumstances, and E.J. Dionne, a leading proponent of the Third Way, to admit it is lacking pizzazz: "The parties of the moderate left—Democrats included—face the prospect of being politically prudent folk . . . only to see their opponents hijack the public's yearning for a vision with a promise of low taxes and a small government utopia. That's not where the Third Way was supposed to lead." Indeed.

With the Senate now gone (if just by a whisker), Bush will have to seek support for his views from the general public, beyond his own partisan base. This, if he does it, is all to the good. Less facile than Clinton, he is also more serious, and might do what Clinton did not. Clinton helped himself, but he did not move his party, which is now back at Square One. As Peggy Noonan wrote at last summer's convention, "Clintonian moderation was as evanescent as a Clintonian promise or a Clintonian statement; it was just meant to get through the moment. . . . In Los Angeles, it looked as if his footprints too had been washed away in the tide."

Bush on the other hand wants to change his party, and to leave something more solid than sand. But this is something that has to be done slowly and calmly, on a base as broad and as stable as possible, not via a few narrow votes. His career from the start has been one of party-building, coalition-attaching, and taking next steps. Bush, it appears, is playing for history, for a role as a major definer of party, a description that has fit few men. He is, says Tod Lindberg, "embarked on the ambitious project of defining a conservative mainstream politics that supercedes (while incorporating many elements of) the ideological conservatism of the Reagan-Gingrich era. This is a big deal, folks, and the future of the GOP is riding on the outcome." And so it is. ♦

Dick Cheney Was Right

The energy debate *is* about virtue.

BY ROBERT H. NELSON

THE RELEASE of the Bush energy plan is generating an intense debate concerning the best ways of producing and conserving energy in the United States. Much of the discussion involves complex technical issues such as the ability to produce nuclear power from new engineering designs that would need to be foolproof against almost any form of human error.

In seeking to lay the groundwork for the release of the energy plan, though, Vice President Cheney suggested that there might be another important part of the discussion. "Conservation," he declared, "may be a sign of personal virtue," but the nation's energy policy can not be based solely on such a moral sentiment. Many in the media and the environmental movement rushed to heap abuse on Cheney. And he has made little effort to defend the remark. Yet he was right to suggest that energy policy has become a sort of surrogate moral debate for the nation. Until there is wider recognition of this, key elements of the Bush energy plan are not likely to go anywhere.

Exhibit A is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in northeast Alaska. Bush wants to open it for oil and gas drilling but so far lacks the political support in Congress. ANWR is widely treated as though it were an issue of trading off the benefits of oil development against adverse impacts on the environment. But it is really a debate about one way of expressing—or not expressing—the kind of "virtue" that Cheney was speaking about.

It is remarkable but true that 400 years after the Puritans settled the Massachusetts wilderness, and following waves of immigration from all over the world, America is still in important ways a Puritan country. To simplify, the Puritan branch of Calvinism preached that an excess of consumption is a temptation to sin and a threat to one's immortal soul. Echoes of that conviction are still powerful in our discussions of the role of conservation in a national energy strategy.

Environmentalists like to say that oil development should not occur in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge because it is one of the few remaining "untouched places" on earth. However, ANWR is not significantly different in its degree of isolation and remoteness from tens of millions of acres of other lands in northern Alaska (and Canada and Russia) that border on the Arctic.

True, the Porcupine caribou herd has calving grounds there. However, there is little evidence that caribou—which number around 1 million in Alaska and have thrived around the Prudhoe Bay oil field—would be harmed by oil development. Moreover, every place on the planet to some extent has unique biodiversity features. Indeed, there is only one attribute of ANWR that makes it truly special—the enormous amount of oil that lies beneath it.

Why, then, has the environmental

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movement focused on ANWR as a special object of its attentions? Paradoxically, it is the very presence of so much oil. A deliberate decision to leave the enormous oil wealth of ANWR in the ground makes a powerful symbolic statement—that consumption is not everything in life, that there are more important things than producing energy, that economic growth will not yield the utopia once widely expected. In other words, in environmental eyes, closing ANWR off to oil development is a particularly effective way of affirming the "virtue" of the nation—a renunciation of material goods and acquisitiveness that Cotton Mather would have applauded.

Environmentalism, it has been often remarked, is in part a religion—and acts of deep symbolic significance have always been central to religion. Making a large sacrifice is one of the traditional ways in which a community makes a strong religious statement—from a primitive tribe offering up one of its valuable animals to God, to the gathering of contributions to build a Gothic cathedral in medieval Europe. In fact, environmentalists themselves sometimes refer to ANWR as a kind of "cathedral" for our time. To "save" ANWR would be to dedicate perhaps the most expensive church in the history of the world.

Many members of the environmental movement, to be sure, are secularists who are uncomfortable staking out explicitly moral positions. They resolve this dilemma by making a series of "practical" arguments against ANWR oil development. They really are new preachers in the land who want to teach us how to live righteous lives, but they couch their sermons in technical and economic language.

The problem here is that the pragmatic arguments fall apart under close scrutiny. It is often said by opponents of ANWR oil development, for example, that it would further enrich oil "giants" like ExxonMobil. Actually, the oil reserves in ANWR are owned by the federal government. The Interior Department leases oil and gas reserves through competitive bidding and then collects royalties (which are currently bringing in about $5 billion per year from previous federal leases). In ANWR, the federal government would divide the revenues with the state of Alaska.

Most of the economic "surplus"—the revenues minus the costs—in ANWR would go to governments. The federal government and the state of Alaska might receive from $20 billion to $40 billion each over the long run. Assuming the Interior Department does a good job in running the leasing program, the oil companies will end up with little or nothing more than their normal rate of return.

The opponents of ANWR development also argue that the expected oil can provide only six months of U.S. oil consumption (actually, the figure is more like two years). However, if you divide any large project into enough parts, no one part will be essential. This argument recalls the dieter who says: "It is okay to eat this piece of cake now because any one piece will have no effect on my weight six months from now." People who think that way do not get very far in their diets.

Opponents further contend that ANWR oil development is not necessary because there are many opportunities for energy conservation in the United States that could save just as much or more oil. This form of reasoning is analogous to saying a person should avoid one stock market investment because another good investment is also available. Obviously, any good investor will compare the relevant returns. But he is also likely to want a diversified portfolio.

Even the bedrock argument that ANWR has been little touched by human hand is flawed. A military facility was built there in the 1940s. And the Inupiat people have occupied the area for centuries. This argument thus carries the unfortunate implication that the Alaska Natives are something other than human.

If most of the "practical" arguments against ANWR oil development are weak, truth in advertising requires a recognition that many of the arguments in favor of ANWR development are also weak. Indeed, rebutting these flawed arguments has been the best thing the environmental movement has had going for it.

Some of the advocates of developing ANWR oil seem to suggest it will solve the energy problems of California or of the nation over the next few years. But the earliest that oil could be produced from ANWR is six or seven years from now.

The most recent 1998 estimates of the U.S. Geological Survey put expected oil production from ANWR at 7.8 billion barrels. In itself, however, the physical availability of this huge amount of oil means little. If the price of oil falls below $18 per barrel, 40 percent of the ANWR oil would not be economical to pump. Though higher now, world oil prices were frequently below $18 during the 1990s, and reached $10 as recently as 1999.

It is said that ANWR will reduce the dependence of the United States on foreign oil supplies. The reality is that there is a global oil market in which national boundaries are largely irrelevant. The logical place to sell most ANWR oil is probably Japan. The amounts of oil that might be produced in ANWR could never have more than a very small effect, if any, on the international price of oil. There is a genuine problem with overdependence on the Persian Gulf for world supplies of oil. But it is a problem for every nation, perhaps even greater for Europe and Japan. For the United States to seek to resolve this problem by itself makes as much sense as acting alone on matters of climate change.

So what is the real case for developing ANWR? It is simply that its expected oil reserves are a huge economic asset. By themselves they would add perhaps $40 billion to $80 billion to net national income over the next few decades (the exact amount depends on the future price of oil). This income would largely

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come in the form of additional revenues divided between the federal government and the state government of Alaska.

On the other side, the real case for keeping ANWR oil in the ground is that it offers the chance to make a religious statement—a sacrifice that would affirm American "virtue," the very thing that Cheney was correct to perceive as the underlying element in the national energy debate.

If Americans should come to recognize this as the actual choice, it seems likely that a majority will believe the oil should be developed and that environmentalists perhaps should spend more time in real churches. It is, to say the least, hypocritical to drive a Volvo and jet-set across the world, and then turn around and lament the evils of modern consumption.

Getting into moral domains like this will, however, involve political risk—as Vice President Cheney has learned. There is nothing like the fury of the hypocrite exposed. For the Bush administration, the political risk may not in the end be worth the $20 billion to $40 billion in revenue that would come to the federal government. Americans also have a longstanding aversion to debating religion in public. That is why the true ANWR debate has been disguised.

Yet, the stakes go well beyond ANWR. The fate of nuclear power in the 21st century will also have as much to do with issues of national "virtue" as with any technical considerations. Whatever its practical advantages, nuclear power for many opponents has become a symbol of what they see as the tendency of human beings in the modern era to "play God."

Ultimately, the fate of both nuclear power and the oil in ANWR will be resolved as much by the ethics of national "virtue" as by economics. Following the release of the Bush plan, an honest debate on the future shape of national energy policy may require the services of theologians as much as those of engineers and economists. ♦

The Naive Moose

And other cutting-edge biodiversity problems.

BY WOODY WEST

HAS THE NAIVE MOOSE popped up on your mental radar? One of the fashionable items on the green agenda, under the rubric of biodiversity, is the reintroduction of species to territory from which they have disappeared—many of them no doubt emigrating to California and Oregon. The reintroduction of large carnivores like bears and wolves can make existence precarious for beasts such as moose that have been idyllically doing whatever moose do when their predators vanish. Inserting bears and wolves back into the neighborhood "can be a field day for the predators and a rout for their prey," as a recent *New York Times* account put it. Lacking fear, the moose became fast food for the hungry returnees.

The lead researcher of this reintroduction exercise, Dr. Joel Berger, a biologist at the University of Nevada at Reno, said, "We were dealing with moose that had not seen or smelled bears or wolves for about 45 to 70 years. . . . We basically showed that these animals were indeed truly naive."

So how did the intrepid Dr. Berger arrive at his conclusion? One of his techniques in Wyoming was to intrude into the huge ruminants' neighborhood, occasionally wearing "a moose suit," and to lob snowballs containing wolf and bear urine or feces at them. Moose in Alaska, which have been contending with predators for years, were hostile. The naive moose of Wyoming remained phlegmatic.

This sounds like a classic Bob Newhart telephone routine. Bob, as grant evaluator: "Let's see if I've got this, Dr. Berger—you wear a moose suit out in the woods . . . and you, you toss snowballs at the big guys, that right? And the snowballs contain, ah, bear and wolf urine and feces. . . . Laughing? No, no—something must have caught in my throat. Well, it sounds like real interesting research, and a couple of mil' ought to underwrite it, you think? We'll get back to you on this, Dr. Berger—yes, we'll call you. By the way, where do you buy your moose suits?"

There are quite a number of these predator reintroduction projects

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going on, evidently, even though the majority of them have been unsuccessful, according to the news story. But that hardly deters researchers; indeed, it probably increases their fervor. Much of the money for these endeavors will surely come from you, via the feds. That, in turn, could lead to some vicious infighting, if it's not going on already.

The Forest Service likely has created a SWAT team to blunt the Fish and Wildlife Service's blue-ribbon task force, both furiously grabbing for jurisdiction. Each will solicit support from earnest lobbyists of the well-funded ecological lobby. Whichever department emerges victorious, of course, there quickly will be created a web of sub-agencies, offices, and swarms of bureaucratic chiefs and chieftains—in fact, each department will rev up, duplicating the other's flow chart to grab a slice of the action.

There will be established a "Division of Species Reintroduction," with jurisdiction over an "Office of Transplanted Predators." Reporting to these new warrants will be the "Section on Ursine Analysis" and the "Section on Lupine Evaluation." Presiding over the entire enterprise will be a departmental undersecretary, with the usual flock of special assistants and deputies to the special assistants. The ambitious process eventually will swell, as bureaucracies always do, to include audio-visual teams to record the re-adaptation, a flotilla of helicopters and snowmobiles to get the researchers into those far reaches, where it is a long way between 7-Elevens.

There will have to be a "Bureau of Moose Adaptation," of course, charged with reeducation for the "truly naive." In the despotic times in which we live, that function suggests quadruped "reeducation camps" for the most clueless of the moose—those perhaps who kick the noxious snowballs back at Dr. Berger and his co-adjutors.

This further conjures images of tracts of wilderness surrounded by palisade fences topped with razor wire into which "at risk" moose will be herded. Platoons of graduate students majoring in the sexy new specialty of Edenic Restoration (motto: "Where only man is vile") will lecture them on wellness measures to pursue after the wolves and the bears are loosed among them. Then . . . but this quickly gets out of hand.

The question does arise, though—do the bears and the wolves really long to be back there where it's root-hog-or-die, so to speak? The zealots of species reintroduction doubtless are as nobly motivated as a biped can be. Might there, however, be another consideration: Once organic connections are disrupted, is it possible to restore them? Or is it pretty much an exercise in the factitious? And the hubristic? ♦

The Battle over the Boy Scouts

A year after the Supreme Court decision, it's a standoff. BY PETER FERRARA

JUNE 28 WILL MARK the one-year anniversary of the Boy Scouts' victory in the landmark Supreme Court decision of *Boy Scouts of America* v. *Dale*. In that case, the Court ruled that the Boy Scouts could dismiss an adult troop leader who had openly declared his homosexuality and become a gay activist, contrary to the teachings and principles of the Boy Scouts. The Court held that the constitutional right to freedom of association protected the Scouts' freedom to choose their own leaders, and the messages those leaders would send by their own personal example.

As with many court decisions, this was not the end but just the beginning of a culture war. The surprising result is that a year into the siege, the Scouts are more than holding their own.

In response to the *Dale* decision, liberal and left-wing activist organizations began a nationwide campaign to ostracize and isolate the Scouts. The Scouts may have a legal right to their policy on gays, but these groups want the rest of society to ostracize them if they continue to exercise that right. This attitude was best expressed by the *New York Times*, which labeled the Scouts as "something akin to a hate group" because they will not retain openly gay Scoutmasters.

This anti-Scout campaign is having an impact. The Los Angeles city council voted unanimously to end police sponsorship of Scout activities and stop free use of meeting rooms in city facilities. The New York City school board has barred city schools from sponsoring Scout activities. San Francisco, Minneapolis, Dade County, Florida, Santa Barbara, California, and Framingham, Massachusetts, have halted all Scouting recruitment in their schools and even prohibited the distribution of Scout literature.

In Florida, the Broward County school board evicted the Scouts from all school buildings. The Portland police department, under pressure from the city's mayor, dropped its sponsorship of Scout Explorer posts. Levi Strauss & Co. and the Knight Ridder newspaper chain have cut off all contributions to the group. In San Diego, the ACLU is suing the city to evict the Scouts from Balboa Park, where they built and have long oper-

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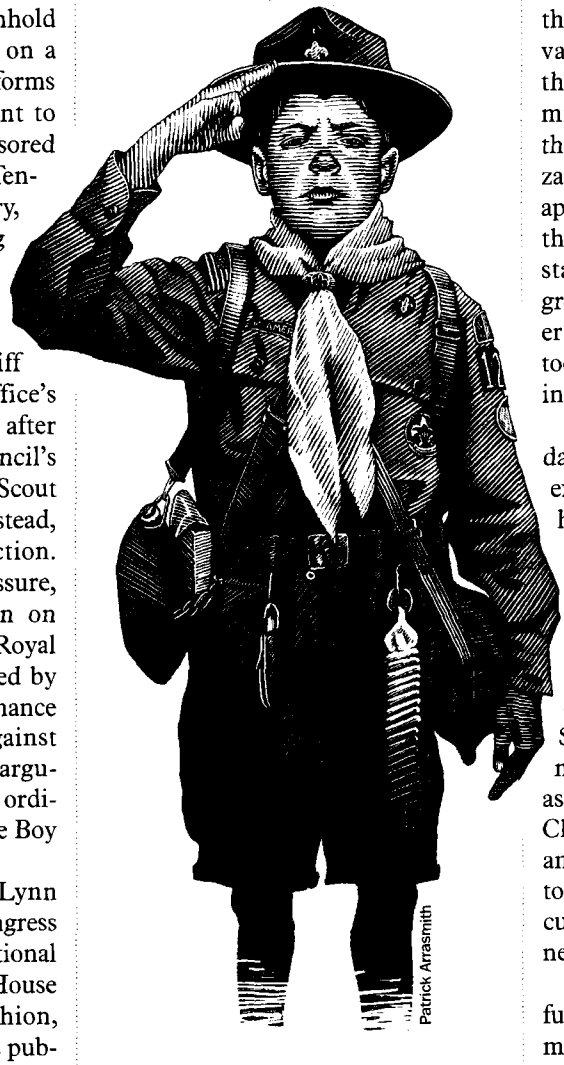
ated excellent camping and recreational facilities open to the public. In addition, 32 local United Way chapters in 15 states have cut off their funding of local Scout groups.

But the Boy Scouts and their allies have successfully fought back. A Florida court reversed the Broward County school board's eviction of the Scouts, holding that once schools made their facilities available to community groups under generally established rules, they could not withhold access to those facilities based on a group's views. This ruling now forms the basis of a recent amendment to the current education bill, sponsored by senator Jesse Helms and Tennessee congressman Van Hilleary, that would deny federal funding to school districts that forbid the Boy Scouts from using school facilities.

In Los Angeles, county sheriff Lee Baca refused to end his office's sponsorship of Scout activities, after hearing protests of the city council's decision from local supporters, Scout alumni, and radio talk shows. Instead, Baca criticized the council's action. Dade County, under public pressure, was forced to back off its ban on Scouting in public schools. In Royal Oaks, Michigan, citizens defeated by 68 percent to 32 percent an ordinance banning discrimination against homosexuals, based in part on arguments from opponents that such ordinances had been used against the Boy Scouts.

When California Democrat Lynn Woolsey introduced a bill in Congress last September to rescind the national charter of the Boy Scouts, the House voted it down in lopsided fashion, 362-12. This tally merely reflects public opinion. A recent national Portrait of America poll found that 75 percent of the public held a favorable view of the Boy Scouts, versus 11 percent unfavorable. After hearing of the Scouts' position on openly gay adult leaders, 36 percent viewed the Scouts more favorably and 28 percent less favorably. By an overwhelming margin of 61 percent to 17 percent, the public believes the Scouts should be free to set their own policy on the issue.

In addition, the local United Way chapters that have cut off funding for the Scouts represent only about 3 percent of the 1,400 local United Way chapters nationwide. And even in these jurisdictions, when donors specify that their funds should go to the Scouts, the United Way still must direct that money to the Scouts. In some instances, it



turns out, this has actually increased donations, since many donors who once gave general contributions now specifically designate that their funds go only to the Boy Scouts. After the local United Way in West Palm Beach, Florida, cut off the Scouts from a share of general funds, contributions to the Scouts through the United Way tripled. In Duluth, Minnesota, Scout United Way funds increased by 20 percent after the general fund cutoff. Indeed, contributions nationwide have increased since the Supreme Court decision in *Dale*, and membership, at 6.2 million boys, is 20 percent higher than in 1990.

In a liberal society, the Boy Scouts should be free to decide whom they want as adult leaders and what moral messages they want to communicate. Those who disagree with the Scouts would, of course, be free to criticize them. They could even organize a private-sector boycott of the Scouts if they wanted. But a more liberal-minded response would be to start their own competing scouting organization. There is a model for such an approach. Some religious groups who think the Boy Scouts are too secular started their own religious scouting groups years ago. Others who consider the regular Scouts militaristic and too hierarchical have started competing groups.

But there is something more fundamental at stake here, which explains why our modern "liberals" have chosen instead a frontal attack on the Boy Scouts. The true target of the anti-Scout groups is not the Scouts, but the traditional moral views they espouse. They wish to brand those views as socially unacceptable discrimination. If the Boy Scouts are engaged in such discrimination and are "akin to a hate group" as a result, then so are the Catholic Church, traditional Protestantism, and Orthodox Judaism. Which leads to the question: If the Left wins this cultural battle over the Scouts, what's next?

All of this illiberalism stems from a fundamental change in the gay rights movement. It began by arguing that adults should be free to do what they choose in the privacy of their own bedrooms, without government interference. But today, the movement advocates the very different proposition that the power of government should be used to force everyone to approve of homosexual conduct, morally and socially. That cannot be achieved by liberal means, because it is not a liberal goal. ♦

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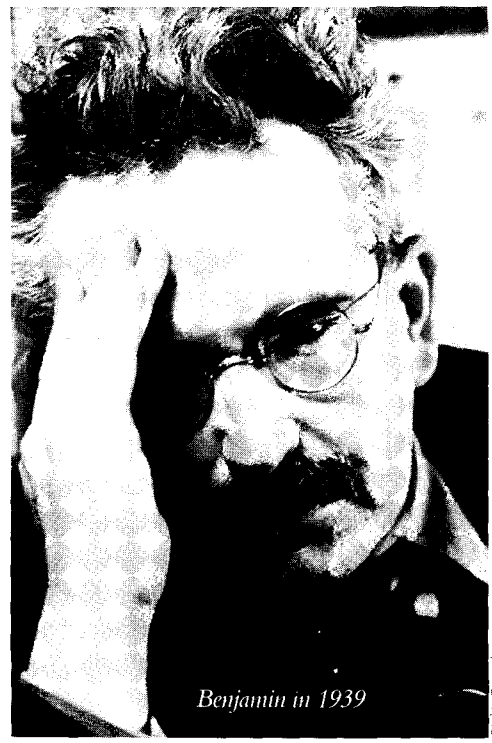
The Mysterious Death of Walter Benjamin

The famed critical theorist is widely believed to have committed suicide while fleeing the Nazis. Was he actually murdered by Stalin's agents?

By Stephen Schwartz

To many contemporary intellectuals, especially academics of postmodern outlook, the radical German writer Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) embodies the restless consciousness of the past century. Jewish and Marxist, a critic and philosopher, he was little known during his lifetime. But after his death—he is widely believed to have committed suicide in Spain, as he attempted to flee the Nazis to America—his essays were collected and translated into English in the '60s and '70s. These challenging works form the basis for his standing as a leading social critic of his day.

His friend and admirer Hannah Arendt called Benjamin "probably the most peculiar Marxist ever." A connoisseur of esthetics more than an economic determinist, he wrote outside the rigid strictures of the Marxist canon. While his associates Theodor W. Adorno and Bertolt Brecht embraced Stalinism (the former ambivalently, the latter enthusiastically), Benjamin was more interested in the artistic radicalism of the French Surrealists. His essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" has been read by legions of university students; but the last major work verifiably his, an essay entitled "Theses on the Philosophy of History" written just months before he died, represents something more important: one of the most insightful analyses of the failure of Marxism ever produced.



Benjamin in 1939

Gisèle Freund

Seen by enthusiasts as a kind of latterday Rimbaud, a genius whose work was submerged amid the noise of his capitalist surroundings, and whose life was cut short, Benjamin today—make no mistake—is a superstar. An Amazon search for his name calls up 304 titles—including a memoir by Larry McMurtry, *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections at Sixty and Beyond*. And central to his cult among leftist academics is his suicide.

Benjamin died at a hotel in the Catalan town of Portbou in late September 1940, having just crossed the Pyrenees on foot from France with several companions. A manuscript he reportedly carried with him to the end has disappeared. Thus, his death—in Franco's Spain, as he fled the Nazi invasion of France—is held to epitomize the destruction of the modern intellect by fascism. Yet a careful analysis of the evidence points toward a different conclusion—that Walter Benjamin was murdered by Soviet agents.

This conclusion rests not on any smoking gun, but on two lines of detective work: first, showing how tenuous in all its particulars is the generally accepted story of the suicide; second, showing how thoroughly plausible is the deliberate liquidation of such a man in that time and place. To make this case requires an excursion into the murky world of leftist-intellectual intrigue in wartime Europe.

Stephen Schwartz's latest book is Intellectuals and Assassins: Writings at the end of Soviet Communism.

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In a feature in the *Times Literary Supplement* of February 9, 2001, Lesley Chamberlain, a writer on Freud, reviewed the essentials of the accepted account of the suicide. "Benjamin's famous fate," wrote Chamberlain, "was to fall afoul of the Spanish police . . . who determined to put him on a train [back] to France the next day. Ill, exhausted, and hearing that he was beginning a rail journey that would surely lead to his death in a concentration camp, he overdosed on morphine. Shocked by his demise, or confused as to their orders, the Spanish police allowed the remaining party to continue." Comments Chamberlain, "The history that murdered Benjamin was brutal and nonsensical."

Apart from Benjamin's fear of the Nazis, none of Chamberlain's factual assertions can be confirmed. Momme Brodersen, author of *Walter Benjamin: A Biography*, published in English in 1997 and incorporating recent research, concedes this. "None of the new evidence contradicts [the suicide story], although it does not categorically confirm it either." Documentation of Benjamin's death by a Spanish judge shows no evidence of the presence of drugs. A doctor's report states that a cerebral hemorrhage, perhaps aggravated by the exertion of crossing the Pyrenees, killed him. Strangely, the New York German Jewish weekly *Aufbau*, two weeks after his death, printed an account in which Benjamin committed suicide by swallowing poison "before the horrified eyes of his four women companions."

One of those women, Henny Gurland, is the source of the only contemporaneous document purporting to support the suicide theory, a document often referred to as the "suicide note."

Just how Gurland and Benjamin had met is not clear, but they crossed into Spain together, along with Gurland's son and several other refugees they encountered on the way. An extreme leftist with, according to recent research, a faulty memory, Gurland wrote a letter to her husband, Arkadi Gurland, within two weeks of Benjamin's death. In the letter, she recalled that the morning after they arrived in Portbou, in the hotel where they spent the night, she was summoned to speak with Benjamin "around seven o'clock." She continued: "Benjamin told me that the night before, at 10 P.M., he had taken a massive dose of morphine, but that I should say that he was gravely ill. He gave me a letter for myself and another for Adorno. Then he lost consciousness."

Can we believe that a "massive dose of morphine" required nine to ten hours to take effect? The death register at Portbou places Benjamin's demise at 10 P.M. on September 26, at least 14 hours after this alleged discussion with Henny Gurland. The chronology, moreover, cannot be established with certainty. Brodersen's account, apparently garbled, places both the mountain crossing and Benjamin's death on September 26, but a visit by a doctor, Ramón Vila Moreno, to Benjamin at the hotel in Spain on September 25. Further confusing the chronology, Lisa Fittko, the amateur guide who led Benjamin and the others into Spain, asserts in a memoir that Benjamin first appeared at her door in Marseilles on September 25, but that the trip to the border and the crossing itself were delayed by at least a night.

As for the letters that Gurland says Benjamin gave her, she also claimed that she destroyed them, then later reconstructed their content in the form of a single communication of postcard length, in French, dated September 25, 1940. This appears in *The Complete Correspondence* of Adorno and Benjamin (published in English in 1999). It reads in full:

> In a situation with no way out, I have no other choice but to end it. It is in a little village in the Pyrenees where nobody knows me that my life will be finished. I ask you to transmit my thoughts to my friend Adorno and to explain to him the position in which I saw myself placed. There is not enough time to write all the letters I would have liked to write.

There are several problems with this text. Portbou is not a "village in the Pyrenees," but a fairly large municipality on the coast. Then there is the oddity of a German, at death's door, choosing to communicate with two Germans in French. Above all, this "suicide note"—cited by Broderson as "the only 'conclusive' proof" for the suicide theory—is nothing of the kind. Whatever Walter Benjamin may have written on the day he died has not survived. The author of this message is Henny Gurland.

To step back and follow the trail leading up to the death of Walter Benjamin, we must return to the fall of France in June 1940.

German troops entered Paris on June 14. Some two million people, French as well as foreign, among them many anti-Nazi intellectuals, had begun a mad rush south ahead of the invader. This frantic exodus was not the first such journey. When the desperate multitudes approached the Spanish border, the human stream seemed to have reversed a tide seen just a year before: In the spring of 1939, half a million Catalans, many of them anarchists defeated in the Spanish Civil War, had walked through the passes of the Pyrenees and poured into France.

Among these Spanish Republicans there had been many foreigners. The French government had herded them into camps. With the onset of World War II in September 1939, they were joined by thousands of German, Austrian, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian refugees living in

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Paris, who were ordered interned by the French authorities. Walter Benjamin was one of these; for three months, he was held at Vernuche in the Loire valley. In November 1939, he returned to Paris, where he remained until the arrival of the Nazi armies in the capital. Then he joined the tramp southward. But progress was slow; he arrived in Marseilles in August. Although the American visa that had been arranged for him should have allowed him to transit Spain safely, he decided—for reasons never elucidated—not to enter Spain by train but to cross the border on foot, through the mountains.

In the meantime, a relevant development had taken place in New York. At a luncheon on June 25, the Emergency Rescue Committee had been established with the mission of finding leading Jewish and anti-Nazi intellectuals in France and transporting them to North and South America. The chief organizer of the effort was an Austrian leftist exile, Karl Borromaeus Frank, alias Paul Hagen. Hagen's representative on the scene in France would be a young American liberal journalist, Varian Fry.

Fry, the subject of a recent film, *Varian's War*, as well as a biography, and the author of two volumes of memoirs, succeeded in saving numerous leading European cultural figures. These included Hannah Arendt, the artists Marcel Duchamp, Marc Chagall, and Jacques Lipschitz, leading surrealists including the poet and essayist André Breton and painters André Masson and Max Ernst, and dozens more political thinkers, sociologists, and psychologists.

Fry was a hero, and the Emergency Rescue Committee saved many lives, but it had its dark side. Paul Hagen was by all accounts a dubious character. He had been a leading figure in a clandestine Leninist organization, New Beginning, that had infiltrated the German and Austrian Socialist and Communist parties in the 1930s. During and after the war, New Beginning alumni showed an uncanny ability to insert themselves, and to function as agents of influence, wherever important decisions were being made.

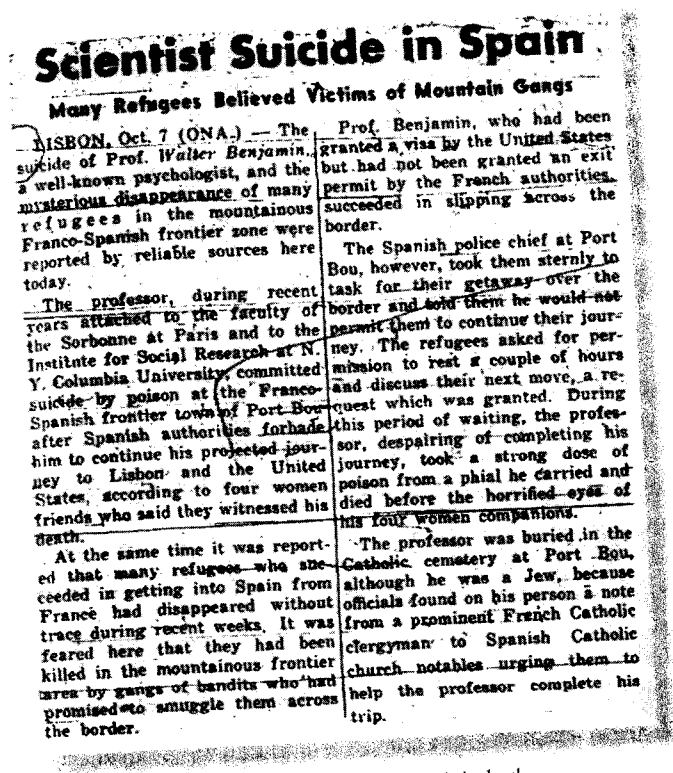
And Hagen was devious. He received money to float the Emergency Rescue Committee from a particularly nasty Soviet agent in California, Mildred Edie Brady. He managed to slip in and out of Nazi Germany unmolested on underground missions. Andy Marino, a biographer of Fry, strongly suggests that Hagen tried to persuade Fry to let him take the American's passport and impersonate him in Europe.

In all he did, Hagen gave priority to the interests of his Leninist network. The first individuals he asked Fry to track down and smuggle out of France were not leading intellectuals but four completely unknown New Beginning cadres. Fry complied, dedicating resources and incurring risk to save these four ciphers. Something strange was afoot.

Hagen and New Beginning may have fallen under the control of the Soviet secret police. According to anti-Communist researcher Herbert Romerstein, documents in the Berlin archives of the German Communist party indicate that Hagen served as an agent for Moscow. When Hagen came to the United States in the late 1930s, his visa was sponsored by a Soviet spy in the State Department, Lauchlin Currie, and he was associated with another Soviet agent, Alfred Stern.

In 1942, Hagen would attempt to join the militantly anti-fascist Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency. But as Romerstein reveals in his new book, *The Venona Secrets*, Hagen was less than candid with the OSS about his involvement in a notorious incident, the disappearance of socialist activist Mark Rein from Republican Spain. Rein, the son of a famous Russian anti-Communist exile, had vanished from a hotel in revolutionary Barcelona, leading to an uproar among foreign supporters of the Spanish Republic concerned about the widening campaign of terror by Soviet agents behind Republican lines.

Hagen told the OSS he had gone to Spain in July 1937 to try to find out what had happened to Rein, a comrade in New Beginning, but he concealed the fact that he had also



Scientist Suicide in Spain

Many Refugees Believed Victims of Mountain Gangs

LISBON, Oct. 7 (ONA.) — The suicide of Prof. *Walter Benjamin*, a well-known psychologist, and the mysterious disappearance of many refugees in the mountainous Franco-Spanish frontier zone were reported by reliable sources here today.

The professor, during recent years attached to the faculty of the Sorbonne at Paris and to the Institute for Social Research at N. Y. Columbia University, committed suicide by poison at the Franco-Spanish frontier town of Port Bou after Spanish authorities forbade him to continue his projected journey to Lisbon and the United States, according to four women friends who said they witnessed his death.

At the same time it was reported that many refugees who succeeded in getting into Spain from France had disappeared without trace during recent weeks. It was feared here that they had been killed in the mountainous frontier area by gangs of bandits who had promised to smuggle them across the border.

Prof. Benjamin, who had been granted a visa by the United States but had not been granted an exit permit by the French authorities, succeeded in slipping across the border.

The Spanish police chief at Port Bou, however, took them sternly to task for their getaway over the border and told them he would not permit them to continue their journey. The refugees asked for permission to rest a couple of hours and discuss their next move, a request which was granted. During this period of waiting, the professor, despairing of completing his journey, took a strong dose of poison from a phial he carried and died before the horrified eyes of his four women companions.

The professor was buried in the Catholic cemetery at Port Bou, although he was a Jew, because officials found on his person a note from a prominent French Catholic clergyman to Spanish Catholic church notables urging them to help the professor complete his trip.

The Aufbau *account of Benjamin's death*

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been in Spain in March of that year, in Rein's company. Rein disappeared on the night of April 9.

Another New Beginning member, author and economist Franz Neumann, is identified in the Venona documents as a Soviet spy inside the OSS, where one of his leading collaborators was Arkadi Gurland, the husband of Henny Gurland. (Neumann's own widow would marry another OSS colleague, the Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse. In addition, the tentacles of New Beginning extended to the dissident psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich and German leftist politician Willy Brandt. Much research on this topic has been done by a biographer of Reich, Jim Martin, for his self-published book *Wilhelm Reich and the Cold War*.)

Finally, one more associate of Hagen in New Beginning, a Czech agent of Soviet terror named Leopold Kulcsar, had been in Barcelona in 1937, assigned to track down and arrest German-speaking anti-Stalinists and torture them into false confessions of betraying the Spanish Republic. Moscow wanted a parallel, outside Soviet borders, to the infamous purge trials, and the targets of attempts to realize such a judicial travesty included George Orwell.

Lest all this seem a digression, an anecdote from the refugee flight from Paris in 1940 is illuminating. Miriam Davenport, a young American who would work for Varian Fry, fled to Toulouse, where she fell in with one Katia Landau, an Austrian anti-Communist leftist who had personally escaped the clutches of Leopold Kulcsar. The Stalinists had twice arrested Landau in Barcelona in 1937. The first time, she had organized a hunger strike and was released within a week. Rearrested "without a warrant and by sheer brute force," she was confronted by an interrogator who repeatedly asked her—in a jail controlled by the Spanish Left—whether she was Jewish. "He told me, 'For us it is a question of race,'" she recounted in *Stalinism in Spain*, published in 1938. "I replied that for us Communists and Socialists the question of race does not come up. But it did remind me of the language of the [Nazis]."

What Katia Landau told Miriam Davenport in Toulouse was so alarming Davenport would remember it decades later and include it in a memoir now posted on a website dedicated to her memory. Landau was afraid. She had detected operating among the refugees one of the Russian agents involved in her imprisonments in Spain. She told Davenport, "We are all in danger. He will see to it that the Gestapo knows where to find us. That is how they work." Landau fled, while Davenport proceeded to Marseilles, where she was horrified to be approached by the same Russian spy, who tried to get her to reveal Landau's whereabouts. She asked him about the Communists' attitude toward the fall of France, given that the Hitler-Stalin pact was then in force. He replied, "We are observing a benevolent neutrality." Her appreciation of such complex dangers was one of the reasons Davenport decided to help Varian Fry.

Unquestionably, the Soviet secret police was operating a chokepoint in southern France—sifting through the wave of fleeing exiles for targets of liquidation. These included open anti-Stalinists as well as individuals associated with dissident positions by more tenuous, personal ties.

To track down their targets, the Soviets employed agents of many nationalities. As John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr explain in their *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America*, these agents, "serving as relief officials, would use their freedom of movement among the warring nations of Europe (America was not yet a belligerent), to act as covert couriers for the Soviets." Thus, in September 1940, Georgi Dimitrov, head of the Communist International, secretly issued an order to Earl Browder, head of the American Communist party. In imperfect English, his instruction to Browder was: "Have some of your peoples not known as members of Party in the organization that have to be organized in your country for various relief to people of Europe." A month later, Noel Field, a former colleague of Alger Hiss and fellow Soviet spy in the State Department, quit his post with the League of Nations. He joined the Unitarian Service Committee, for which he opened a refugee office in Marseilles, working as a secret liaison between Communist leaders in the Nazi-occupied lands.

Proof that a Soviet liquidation operation was underway in the area had already come in the summer of 1940, in the case of Willi Munzenberg, an old Marxist revolutionary and creator of the global network of "front groups" that so successfully wooed Western liberals during the '20s and '30s. Munzenberg and his main underling, the Soviet secret police agent (and quondam husband of Marlene Dietrich) Otto Katz, had employed the Hungarian-born writer Arthur Koestler and others in distributing Communist disinformation worldwide. But Munzenberg, and then Koestler, broke with the Soviets, the first in 1937, the second a year later. Katz never did. He remained one of the most fearsome terrorist intellectuals in Moscow's employ.

Munzenberg had been arrested and held in an internment camp in southern France until the summer of 1940, when he was released and walked away in the company of two "German Socialists." He soon was found hanged from a tree near Grenoble. The man who knew the most about

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Russian disinformation operations had been silenced.

Heading south from Paris, Walter Benjamin walked straight into this maelstrom of evil. And, although his acolytes have chosen to ignore it, he was eminently qualified to appear on a Soviet hit list.

View from Columbarien Cemetery, Portbou, where Benjamin is buried

In Marseilles, in September 1940, the protagonists of the final act in the drama of Walter Benjamin were in place.

Varian Fry was there, working for the Emergency Rescue Committee. It is unclear whether he had any direct contact with Benjamin, though he would be informed of the latter's death.

Another supporting character was Benjamin's friend Arthur Koestler, who, to escape internment, had enlisted in the French Foreign Legion using a fake Swiss identity as "Albert Dubert." In August, he was sent to a Legion station in Marseilles. Eventually, with the help of Varian Fry, he would obtain false papers authorizing transit to Casablanca. As Munzenberg's former subordinate and co-defector from Moscow, Koestler was a marked man. Thus, when Alfred Kantorowicz, a Communist propagandist who had worked for Munzenberg, but who remained loyal to Stalin, saw Koestler in the French port, he avoided him. Notably, Walter Benjamin didn't. Indeed, he and Koestler sat in a café, exposed to the world, and discussed their future.

Recounting their meeting in a memoir, *Scum of the Earth*, published in 1941, Koestler would contribute to the legend of Benjamin's suicide. He said that Benjamin—"one of the most bizarre and witty persons I have ever known"—showed him a hoard of 62 sedative pills he had kept since Hitler's takeover in 1933 to maintain the option of ending his own life. Koestler had no such supply, and Benjamin "reluctantly" divided the seven-year-old pills with him, keeping only 31 tablets for himself. Koestler wrote, "They were enough. . . . At Portbou the *Guardia Civil* arrested him. He was told that next morning they would send him back to France. When they came to fetch him for the train, he was dead."

Koestler was not infallible on points of detail. In *Scum of the Earth*, he stated Benjamin's age as 55, when he was only 48. In a later book, *The Invisible Writing*, he seemed to say that Benjamin began with only 30 pills before sharing them. And in a much later translation of *Scum of the Earth*, he gives the original number of pills in Benjamin's possession as 50.

However, Koestler knew very well something else about Benjamin. The two men had lived next door to each other in Paris in the period after Willi Munzenberg's split with Moscow, and had frequently joined Otto Katz in poker games. What may have been revealed in loose talk around the poker table can only be guessed, but it would have caused Katz and his superiors in the Soviet secret police to see Benjamin as dangerous. Indeed, Koestler, Benjamin, Katz, Munzenberg, and at least one other ominous figure—Rudolf Roessler, better known as the operative "Lucy"—had a history together that scholars of Benjamin have glided over. Benjamin may have come to know much too much.

Consider his ties to Roessler. This extraordinary German exile had opened a publishing house in Switzerland. After Hitler came to power in Germany, Roessler and Benjamin had maintained a literary relationship. In 1936, Roessler had published a book of classic letters edited by Benjamin (under the pseudonym Detlef Holz) entitled *German Men* and intended for sale in Germany. As Momme Brodersen notes, Roessler was "a specialist in subversion, . . . a genuine secret agent." Indeed, he was one of the most famous spies to serve in World War II, transferring crucial information from the German high command to Soviet operatives in Switzerland. Benjamin may have known compromising facts about Roessler.

Finally, there was Lisa Fittko, an exiled German leftist in her early thirties and a newcomer to Marseilles. Benjamin had met Fittko's husband Hans a year before in the French internment camp at Vernuche, and she considered him a "friend." Just how Benjamin

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came to choose Fittko as his guide across the mountains is unclear. In her confusing and self-contradictory memoir *Escape Through the Pyrenees* published in 1985, Fittko admits she had "scouted a sure route across the border" mere days before.

She also claimed that Benjamin had already made an unsuccessful attempt at escape, stowing away aboard a freighter dressed as a sailor. Certainly, he was in a hurry to get out of France. But Benjamin, Henny Gurland, and Gurland's son were Fittko's first clients as a Pyrenees guide. Further, her method of selecting a path through the mountains was strange. She relied on a crude diagram drawn from memory by a French contact, claiming to have been directed more or less casually to the "Lister Route." In the memoir, she notes insouciantly, "General Lister of the [Spanish] Republican army had used it for his troops during the Spanish Civil War."

This comment conjures up yet another menacing element of the landscape into which Benjamin had wandered. Enrique Lister was not a general in the Spanish Republican army; he never rose above the rank of colonel. He was, however, one of the most fanatical and ruthless Soviet agents in Spain. He had been trained in Moscow, and took control of a section of the Spanish Republican Army that was used to execute dissident anarchist peasants. His route was a way his terrorist comrades took in and out of Spain.

Lister was so extreme a Stalinist that in the 1970s, when the Spanish Communist party adopted reformist "Eurocommunism," he directed an ultra-Muscovite schism headquartered behind the Iron Curtain and subsidized directly by the KGB. I encountered veteran Listerite cadres in Spain years afterward and can testify to their ultrasectarian and even violent mentality.

Lisa Fittko's choice of the Lister Route had other troubling aspects. The Spanish border was honeycombed with anarchists, as well as members of the dissident Marxist POUM, or Workers' Party of Marxist Unification. These Catalan refugees—"impoverished heroes and hotheads," as one Spanish historian calls them—functioned with great effectiveness smuggling Jews, other anti-Nazis, and British service personnel out of France. They too were terrified at any mention of Lister. Curiously, neither Lisa Fittko nor the Varian Fry network made contact with these mountaineers for many months, until nearly the end of Fry's operation, when Fry became dependent on them.

Lisa Fittko was well aware of the political intrigues in the subculture of refugee rescuers in Marseilles. She knew, for example, that Varian Fry's first mission—to save the four New Beginning cadres—was "a big secret." After Benjamin's catastrophic passage, Fittko's husband joined her. She recalled his telling her, "All the people from New Beginning have gone abroad by now, so there's no more need for secrecy." Soon the Fittkos were recruited by Fry, who rechristened the Lister Route the "F Route." Weirdly, although Fry said he wanted to find "guides who knew the mountains," he settled in the short term for Lisa Fittko, whose sole journey of this kind had resulted in Benjamin's death.

On that trip, Lisa Fittko, Benjamin, and the Gurland youth lugged the writer's heavy briefcase, containing his "new manuscript," along the mountain paths. Four decades later, Fittko quoted Benjamin as saying, "This briefcase is most important to me. I dare not lose it. The manuscript *must* be saved. It is more important than I am, more important than myself."

What could the lost manuscript have contained? Given the disillusionment with the extremist Left explicit in "Theses on the Philosophy of History," written earlier that year, it is possible the new work comprised an even sharper critique of Marxism. Hannah Arendt commented that Benjamin was "rather afraid of the opinion and reaction" of Adorno and others in the Institute for Social Research, the famous Frankfurt school, to his "Theses." But Jewish historian and philosopher Gershom Scholem recalled, in his *Walter Benjamin, The Story of a Friendship*, that Benjamin had declared himself "finished with Russia for good." The lost manuscript may also have contained privileged information Benjamin possessed about his erstwhile poker partners in Paris, including Otto Katz.

(On this score, it is depressing to note that several reviewers of a book published in 2000 by Harvard University Press mistook it for Benjamin's lost work—even though the editors themselves made no such claim. In fact, the Harvard volume, *The Arcades Project*, is the translation of an unwieldy collection of notes, articles, and quotations Benjamin left behind when he fled Paris. It is ludicrous to imagine that he would have laboriously copied all this out in the days before Xerox machines and carried it with him into exile. The manuscript lost on the Spanish border has never been found.)

After many hours, the travelers reached a cliff overlooking Portbou. There Lisa Fittko left them, pointing the refugees toward the town. At some point, the Spanish authorities, apparently out of bureaucratic arbitrariness, decided to send Benjamin back to France the next day. He entered the hotel in Portbou in anticipation of being expelled. He may simply have failed to find an official susceptible to bribery. But there were definitely Gestapo agents in the town, possibly in the hotel. There Benjamin died.

After his death the Gurlands and the other refugees

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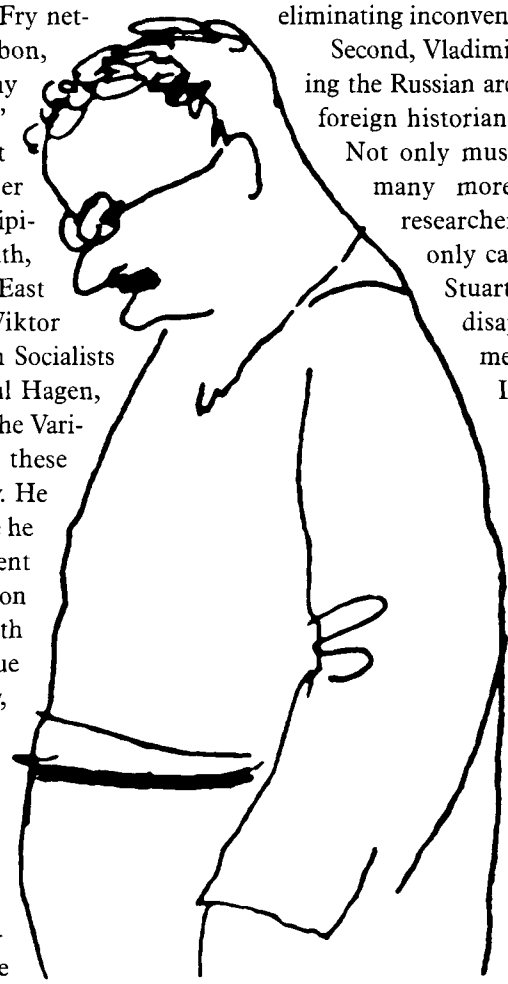
who had joined them paid a bribe and proceeded on their way through Spain. Koestler received belated news of Benjamin's "suicide" in Lisbon. By his own account, he reacted by attempting to kill himself, presumably using the pills his old poker partner had given him. But his stomach rebelled, and he vomited up the poison. Was this reaction motivated by depression or despair? Or did Koestler know something about Benjamin's situation that made the latter's suicide a cause for fear or guilt?

The Fittkos eventually quit the Fry network and escaped to Cuba via Lisbon, assisted by Spanish anarchists. Henny Gurland, author of the "suicide note," went on to marry the psychiatrist Erich Fromm, and died in 1952. Her ex-husband, Arkadi Gurland, the recipient of her account of Benjamin's death, was linked during the 1950s to an East German agent in West Germany, Viktor Agartz. After World War II, German Socialists prevented Karl B. Frank—alias Paul Hagen, the malign background presence in the Varian Fry network and throughout these events—from returning to Germany. He remained in the United States, where he died in 1969. The poker-playing agent Otto Katz came under Soviet suspicion during the war for his association with British spies and was hanged in Prague in 1952. Rudolf Roessler, a k a Lucy, was arrested in Switzerland in 1953 and convicted of spying for Czechoslovakia; he died in 1958. Koestler emerged obsessed with suicide, and expired in a death pact with his much younger wife in 1983.



Jean Selz's caricature of Benjamin, reproduced in *Walter Benjamin, a Biography* (Verso)

The Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo, noting the disappearance of the manuscript "for which Benjamin was prepared to sacrifice his life," asked for a "rigorous investigation as to what happened to it." No such investigation has ever been completed. The last word may remain with Hannah Arendt, who pointed out that Benjamin died during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, "whose most feared consequence at that moment was the close cooperation of the two most powerful secret police forces in Europe."

I do not pretend to have established how, why, or at whose hands Walter Benjamin died; it is clear, however, that few of the widely accepted details of his death can be relied upon. Three lessons emerge from this inquiry.

First, "rigorous investigation" must continue, unfashionable though it be in the academy. Historians must abandon their politically correct prejudices. These biases prevent them from recognizing the truth of the Cold War insights of Koestler and others and understanding the monstrous evils of Stalinism, from the recruitment of intellectuals for terrorist tasks, to Moscow's practice of eliminating inconvenient witnesses.

Second, Vladimir Putin has made noises about closing the Russian archives that were opened to local and foreign historians in the wake of communism's fall. Not only must these archives remain open, but many more should be made available to researchers—for Benjamin's is far from the only case still shrouded in mystery. Juliet Stuart Poyntz, an American Communist, disappeared from her New York apartment in 1938 and was never seen again. Like Marc Rein, José Robles, the translator and friend of the American author John Dos Passos, vanished in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. The Russian defector Walter Krivitsky was an apparent suicide in Washington in 1941. The anarchist labor leader Carlo Tresca was shot dead on a Manhattan street in 1943. Otto Ruhle, biographer of Marx, died in Mexico City in a murky situation the same year. The anti-Stalinist writer Victor Serge and the Yugoslav-American historian Louis Adamic perished after the war in questionable circumstances, the first in Mexico, the second in the United States. And so on. After decades of concealment and deliberate obliviousness, the truth of such cases cries out to be revealed. Mr. Putin, open these files!

Finally, there is much nostalgia among intellectuals for the 1930s, but the history recounted here is terrifying. Nearly every protagonist lied, knew lethal secrets, or had a hidden agenda. One night recently, after spending a day in the Library of Congress researching this article, I came out into the cool evening mist of Washington, capital of the Free World. My sense of relief was so intense I felt as if I had escaped from hell; I recalled the words at the end of Dante's *Inferno*: "*E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle*"—We came out and looked up at the stars. ♦

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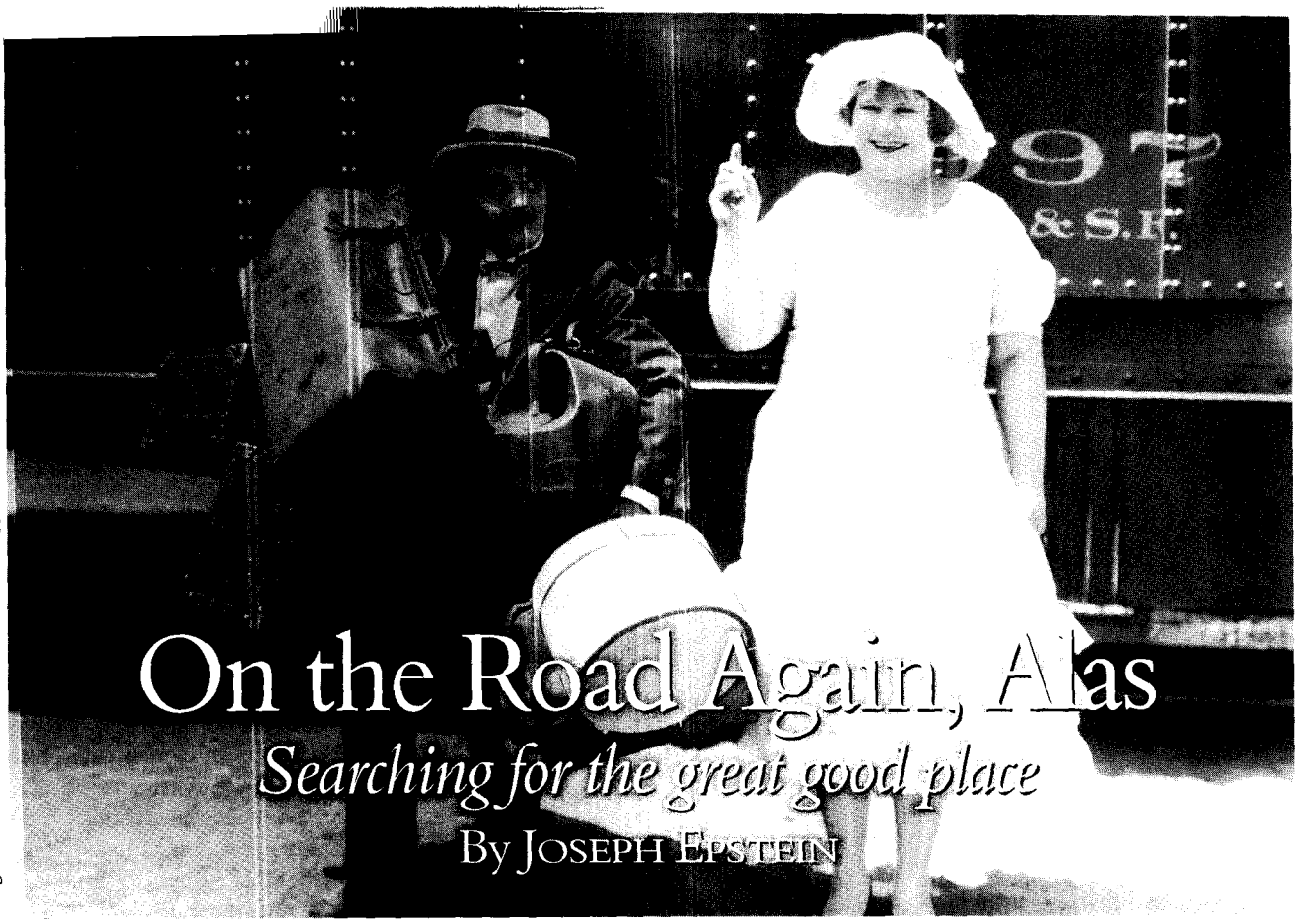

George Davis and Babe London in the film *Scrambled Eggs* (1925). All photos: Hulton Archive.

On the Road Again, Alas

Searching for the great good place

By Joseph Epstein

It is 7 A.M. and I have just arisen, two hours later than usual. My wife and eleven-year-old granddaughter are still asleep in the second of this two-bedroom condominium we have rented on Sanibel Island, Florida, which also contains two bathrooms and three television sets, all with VCRs. I open a light drape, slide back a glass door, and step out onto a screened-in balcony. The view is of palm trees, shrubs trimmed to a topiary nicety, a swimming pool filled with warmish, turquoise-colored water. Beyond are more palm trees, and beyond that, at perhaps two hundred yards distance, teal-colored at this early hour, is the gentle Gulf of Mexico. Walking along its white-sanded, shell-laden beaches yesterday I saw dolphins frolicking fewer than twenty yards from shore. The temperature has been in the eighties, sunny, with occasional breezes. I sigh and wish I were elsewhere.

"Have lotsa fun," says an older man, white-haired, tall, deeply tanned, as he loads the groceries in the back of my rented Nissan Altima. "Gilligan's," a sign on Sanibel's Periwinkle Way reads, "A fun place to eat"; I make a mental note never to stop there. The only thing worse than "a fun place to eat," in my view, are those places that advertise "Family Fun," two words that, lashed together, automatically force my foot down heavier on the accelerator. I am no fun guy and have, perhaps you are coming to gather, a fun problem.

More than a simple antipathy to what my countrymen have decided is fun is entailed. My problem runs deeper. I have—as I have only recently grasped—almost no vocation for vacation, and, to make matters worse, I am losing my taste for travel. In the morning hours, before the heat comes up, people on Sanibel are bicycling, rollerblading, smashing tennis balls, whacking away at golf balls, jogging, walking with grim looks of determination on their faces. I myself arrived in Sanibel with no golf sticks, skates, or tennis rackets with sweet spots twice the size of my fairly large head. Nor do I find any pleasure in card games, crossword puzzles, detective novels. For a week's stay I brought four books with me: Balzac's *Cousin Pons*, *The Collected Stories of J.F. Powers*, *A Short Life of Kierkegaard* by Walter Lowrie, and *Auden* by Richard Davenport-Hines. I alternate among the four, read none completely through, and instead spend a lot of my time making astonishingly small and dreary observations, most of them about myself: for example, how my very white legs, under water, look rather corpse-like. What merriment!

Before going off to Florida, I discovered that I owned no shorts. I bought two pair: one of khaki at the Gap, the other, of a lightweight gray, at Foot Locker. I packed a Chinese red, beaked cap and several solid-colored polo shirts and a pair of "Rod Laver" tennis shoes from Adidas. Such comprise my "fun" clothes. Packing them I was reminded of the generations of American men who owned no clothes whatsoever for leisure.

I remember my father walking down to the beach behind our apartment on Sheridan Road in Chicago wearing one of his ribbed underwear shirts, dark blue bathing trunks, black wingtips, and silk socks with arrows on them over legs the exact whiteness of mine today. Alfred Kazin described Edmund Wilson, at the beach at Wellfleet, arriving in stained Panama hat, cane, and long white shirt (of the kind Brooks Bros. used to sell), "sometimes flopping over

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the bulky stomach in Bermuda shorts." This was his get-up—what you saw was what you got. There wasn't one Edmund Wilson for work and another Edmund Wilson for play. Why do I find that so appealing? If you've developed a strong character, why dissipate it in games and goofy costumes: The idea of, say, Henry Kissinger on a golf course, or Colin Powell and Dick Cheney playing badminton feels plain wrong, does it not?

This past summer I was invited to sit for three days in a hotel conference room in Big Sky, Montana, where I rattled away with ten or eleven other people on the subject of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. I accepted the invitation because I love that magnificent book, and love quite as much that extraordinary, ironic little pudge who sat in his study in Lausanne chuckling away, as I like to think of him, while writing it. Montana, which I had not before seen, was part of what persuaded me to accept the invitation. I planned to travel west from there, to drive through Oregon, Washington, and parts of British Columbia, none of which I had seen before.

On that holiday, only Gibbon did not disappoint. Montana and the Northwest provided, as advertised, spectacular scenery: staggeringly dramatic mountains, lush redwoods, dense rain forests suggesting the prehistoric. A turn in the road and, lo!, an azure lake, encircled by gigantic conifers. Such trees were everywhere, causing me, at the wheel, to sing: *You're non-deciduous now, so what're you gonna do?*

Yet the whole thing, I found, was a bit much: a much of a muchness, as the English say. Nature in the Northwest was relentless. A beautiful scene, I decided, pleases but does not excite me. Seeing them in such abundance, one after another, it occurred to me for the first time in my life that perhaps nature was overrated. I began to feel about nature as Groucho, when confronted by the contestant on his quiz show who mentioned that she had some improbably large number of children, said he felt about his cigar: It gave him pleasure, he said, but he didn't want it in his mouth all the time.

Few things are more pleasing than to find what one thinks one's idiosyncratic views corroborated by someone whose mind one much admires. "The country here is dotted with the houses of second-rate writers and painters," writes W.H. Auden of Taos, New Mexico. "It's curious how beautiful scenery seems to attract the second rate. For me, I like it for a holiday, but I'd rather die than live permanently in a beauty spot, at least till I'm much older." I am much older than Auden then was, and it still doesn't do it for me.

I was only a week on Sanibel. I chartered a boat to take my granddaughter

A traveler on the island of Tresco in the Isles of Scilly, 1946.

fishing—a great success; I sat out at the pool reading about poor Kierkegaard's troubles, which were manifold; I walked the beaches, looking for exotic shells and picking up snatches of mundane conversation: "It's a junk bond, what'd he expect?"; "... her sophomore year at Tufts"; "... they're crazy to give Bobby Knight a job." I pass a tallish man, the very type of a CEO, in an orange bathing suit, himself walking the beach, saying into his cell phone: "That's no problem. Refer it to Jim." The weather was perfect, untoppable. By the third day out I longed to be back at my desk.

"I do not know what I am looking for abroad," wrote Montaigne in Italy, "but I know well enough what I am escaping at home." Might it be that I like home too much and seek no escape from it? Everything there is near at hand, order reigns, all is familiar, nothing unpredictable. But might this, instead, be a sign of a hardening not of the arteries but of the imagination and spirit? This last is a hypothesis that, like the late Duke and Duchess of Windsor, must be entertained.

I have never been one of those for whom freedom has meant a hasty departure for foreign lands. All my foreign travel has been conventional, the most exotic being a few days in Turkey as part of a Swann's cruise of the Greek Islands. I find I do not long for travel outside Europe. Travel in the Third World holds few enticements for me. I have made a mental note to visit India and Pakistan as soon as England once again makes those countries part of its empire, which is scheduled to take place, I understand, roughly two weeks after hell freezes over. I find myself in the condition of Philip Larkin, who, its being known that he left England only twice in his lifetime, was asked by an interviewer if he wouldn't like to see China. "Yes, of course," Larkin replied, "if I could return home that night."

I have a friend, older than I, who has probably spent more time in Katmandu than I have spent in Manhattan. He is always off, aloft, driving a Land Rover over rocky ground, high upon a Himalaya, or mounted on a French bicycle the mere sight of which is almost enough to make me want to consult a proctologist. He is pedaling away in Greece even as I tap out these lines. None of this is my idea of a good time. Have I become a dull boy? Or was I, possibly, always a dull boy?

My leading subject for anxiety dreams for some years now has been travel. In these dreams, decisive things are always going wrong. I show up at the airport without my tickets, or money, or wallet, or passport, or suitcase, or—in one notable instance—shoes; in the heavy traffic of people, I lose my wife, granddaughter, cat (though why I am traveling with a cat is quite unclear). I am late, the gates are closing, people I

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love are inside the plane, taking off without me. Where am I going, anyway? (Non-sequiturial Africa, perhaps?) And why?

Why, moreover, do I have such dreams when I have had very little serious difficulty in my years of flying? I was once forced to spend a night in a motel near LaGuardia owing to bad weather in Chicago; another time a plane out of Oakland skittered badly on the runway before takeoff, and had to return to the hangar; and we, the passengers, were put up for the night and flown out first-class the next day.

A camel trip to the Sphinx, 1924.

Those incidents aside, flying has gone smoothly enough for me. Sometimes, true enough, flying, which should always be an astonishment, has come to seem a punishment, at least if one is flying economy or coach, which I almost always do. (So, recently, I read, has the King of Norway, on a flight between Oslo and Mallorca, earning him the title, in the headline of an Oslo daily, "The King of Tourist Class." I wonder if he sat aisle, window, or got stuck with the middle seat.) I envy the first-class passengers chiefly the width of their chairs. But the people who sit in first-class seats do not otherwise appear to be very first class; they seem to be mainly salesmen and middle-managers with vast quantities of airline "miles" and rather too wealthy ninnies willing to pay an extra five hundred to two thousand dollars to avoid the rabble (which is to say, me). Nothing further can, nor need, ever be said about airline food. But something about the combination of close quarters, bad food, largish bags stuffed into smallish overhead compartments, and the rest of it has encouraged a phenomenon that has now been given the name "air rage," in which while aloft one somehow flips, goes bonkers, makes specific threats, causing airport police to take one in custody upon arrival.

I do not much mind air travel. I enjoy the tumult of O'Hare, Heathrow, LAX. A *luftmensch* to begin with, I read well in the air; I used to fly with a copy of Pascal's *Pensees*, which never seemed more pellucid than at 30,000 feet. Sometimes I watch bits of the movie without the aid of earphones, I nap, write in my journal. It is only upon arrival that I begin to grow edgy.

The jolt of dislocation that a new country presents has begun to throw me more and more off balance. There is the language and currency to get used to, of course, but in recent years I have become, while abroad, a poor sleeper. In Florence I spent night after night twisting in the sheets while listening to the Vespa scooters roar under our window on the street outside our hotel near the Duomo. Insomnia and jet lag make a dreary cocktail.

Might it be that I am no longer capable of travel fantasies? I have never been abroad alone, and have no yearning to be so now. But the chief travel fantasies have to do with meeting elegantly accented and extraordinarily beautiful partners on trains, in cafes, in the corridors of posh hotels. Hazlitt, who didn't do all that much travel, captured the fantasy nicely when he wrote that "the soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty to think, feel, do just as one pleases." Graham Greene-ish, really—but these fantasies are more proper to a young person; beyond the age of, say, fifty, they become the fantasy of that fool like whom we are told there is no other, the old fool. The travel writings of V.S. Naipaul or Paul Theroux tend to have a reverse, or anti-aphrodisiacal effect. How nice, I think as I read the complaining accounts of their travel, that they have gone to Indonesia—now I don't have to do so myself.

"An effect of traveling in distant places," wrote Auden, who did a fair amount of it in the 1930s (his itinerary included Iceland, China, and Spain during the Civil War), "is to make one reflect on one's past and one's culture

Victorian tourists at Vesuvius, 1898.

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from the outside." True, but perhaps less true than it once was. Less true certainly if one is an American and the indigenes in the country you are visiting are wearing, say, Michael Jordan tanktops and Reebok gym shoes. As like as not, these same indigenes will be going about in American jeans. Israeli academics, fearful of intellectual isolation, are encouraged to travel, and of course the place they chiefly travel to is America. After two centuries of suffering cultural inferiority to Europe, America, for better and worse, is where the action now is. Europeans come to us.

Richard Davenport-Hines, Auden's biographer, remarks that, as of the 1930s, "he deliberately unsettled himself, and until the final years of his life was always a traveler or voluntary exile, spurred by the intellectual masochist's need of the neurosis of estrangement." Hope everyone picked up those words masochist and neurosis and estrangement, for travel has increasingly come to require a certain portion of all three.

Auden suffered under the belief that "exile and isolation had creative uses." They may have, for him—but not for everyone. I prefer the view of Ravel, who said that he obtained more, aesthetically, from an hour of joy than from a long stretch of suffering. Still, the party line has long been that travel is good for the soul—so broadening, so widening—and for no souls is it better than for those of artists.

Goethe acquired substantial intellectual dividends from his trip to Italy. Byron was a great traveler and always went absolutely first class, taking along his own horses and a considerable library. Keats, on a much smaller budget, longed to travel and was only able to do so when at the door of death. "I am a poet," announced Kierkegaard, "I must travel." But he seems to have gone only to Berlin. "Would Italy have cured his melancholy," asks his biographer Walter Lowrie, "and perhaps quenched his peculiar talent?" Useful to recall that the Königsburg Flash, Immanuel Kant, discovered the categorical imperative without ever leaving town.

"In order to understand one's own country," said Somerset Maugham, "one should live in at least two others." Here I would underscore the word *live*. I have never actually lived in a European country, by which I mean settled in one place for four or five months or more.

The closest I've come is a few years ago, when friends lent us their comfortable house in the village of Laconnex, twenty minutes outside Geneva. This took us out of the hotel-restaurant flow of foreign travel—although during the better part of the days, apart from shopping for food, we remained tourists: listening to lectures at Madame de Staël's

Tourists in Florida, c. 1920.

charming house at Coppet, museum-going, shopping, and the rest of it.

But it's one thing to live in a country, another to visit it. The visiting, I contend, is wherein the pain resides. Consider, to begin with, the people whom Henry James, prescient fellow, more than a century ago referred to as "one's detested fellow pilgrims."

A problem with foreign travel, if I may say so, is that one finds the great centers are infested by so many people like oneself. Often they are older and rather wealthier than oneself, though lacking, it goes without saying, one's intrinsic charms. But they are there for the same things one came for: as yet unseen works of art, fresh landscapes, different food.

They remind me in some ways of my father, who traveled scarcely at all, and then, upon retirement, set out to see the world and did a fairly impressive job of it. Up to that point an armchair traveler, seeing the world through PBS documentaries, he embarked in earnest at seventy-five to see it in the flesh. He first went to Israel. Africa south of the Sahara was next. He toured Norway and Denmark and Sweden. He visited Thailand, Hong Kong, and stuck a toe in China. He visited the Soviet Union and saw it again when it was once more Mother Russia. He went to Ecuador and Peru. He traveled to India under the auspices of—believe it or not—the B'nai B'rith. Seeing Alaska and the Panama Canal and much of the Caribbean by ship, he did more cruising than Captain Ahab and Christopher Isherwood combined.

His wife, my mother, though a highly intelligent woman, had almost no geographical curiosity. She had long before arrived at where I seem to be tending. She went with her husband to Israel, and together they flew to Paris on the Concorde, returning from London on the *QE2*. On many of his trips he took his still young grandsons, though on some he went alone. My father took almost no photographs and said very little about these trips on his return. What the motive behind all this expensive travel was remained unclear; I saw him mentally ticking off each continent and country he visited, as if it were his goal to see as much of this planet as possible before departing it. His need—make that his compulsion—for travel approached mania; he seemed only genuinely happy when getting ready to set off on yet another journey. And when, in his ninetieth year, he became too ill to set forth again, something in him died. "See this world before the next" was one of his standard joke lines. Now that he is in the next I hope he is seated in first class.

I'm not sure what my father got out of all his travel. But then I'm no longer sure what anyone does. I suppose those who are committed to traveling feel a need to fill in the blank spots: to see

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Venice in 1958

those wonderful Velázquezes at the Prado, those charming Lorenzettis in Sienna, those magnificent lion statues at Delos, taste that fantastic risotto in Ravenna. But the crowds—Germans, Japanese, Americanos, detested fellow pilgrims all—make it less than easy. "I hereby sentence you," runs a standard judge-and-defendant cartoon in a recent *New Yorker*, "to the Vermeer show on a Saturday afternoon."

Not funny, McGee. Not if you have, as I have, woke in the Jan Luyken Hotel in Amsterdam at 4 A.M. to drive to The Hague to stand in line in the cold drizzle of a Dutch morning to get tickets to see twenty-six paintings by Vermeer as part of a crowd that was even more wall-to-wall than the carpeting. One of the problems with the world, I begin to discover, is that there are too many people in it just like me.

"No hidin' place down here," the old gospel song has it, and it's beginning to seem so in connection with travel. One must be both rich and clever to find what Henry James called "The Great Good Place." In the late 1940s, W.H. Auden bought a home on Ischia, an island in the Bay of Naples, and thought he had found it. But ten years later too many Englishmen arrived to spend their holidays, and so he moved on to buy another in the bleaker landscape of Kirchstetten, near Vienna. Elizabeth Bishop thought she had found her great good place in Key West, Florida. Soon enough something similar had happened to her: Too many second-class poets and critics showed up, and so she moved on to Brazil where she lived with her friend Lota de Macedo Soares. But in Ischia and in Key West, Auden and Bishop were really the advance guard of the despoilers: their presence helping to make their retreats fashionable.

I have not been in either Ischia or Key West, but I have been in Mystic, Connecticut, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, and neither seems anything close to the great good place to me. Great good places are declared with some regularity—Aspen, Colorado; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Big Sky, Montana—but as soon as they are so declared they cease to be either great or good but just places where people keen on the fashionable like to squat. The artists arrive first, then the wealthy, then the tourists; imprinted T-shirts and baseball caps follow. (Life is not easy for me, being a snob and a reverse snob simultaneously.)

While I stood in the great church of St. Mark's in Venice, all I could think of was what a vast clutter all this significance made. Walking through the Old City in Jerusalem, I kept an eye peeled for the serious shenanigans of the PLO. The site of Troy, now in Turkey, left me disappointed. Malcolm Muggeridge once wrote that he thought about God all the time, except when in an Anglican church. Parts of Greece and Flanders Field in Belgium excepted, I fear I am in something of the same condition with regard to visiting the great historical and religious sites.

"I am not one of those who go to Venice to experience an emotion," wrote Jules Renard in his journal. I take his—and he makes my—point. People such as Renard and I, who live mostly in our minds, don't require travel as an expensive lubricant for the imagination. If anything, some of us do better without travel. I think of Wallace Stevens, that most cosmopolitan of poets, who never went to Europe, but wrote letters to Mademoiselle Paule Vidal, his art dealer in Paris, asking her to acquire paintings for him with an amusing unspecificity of detail combined with strong general advice: "I should definitely like you to buy one of the paintings of René Renaud....Whether to buy a Morning or an Evening, a Bay or a Port, I must leave to you, merely reminding you that I like things light and not dark, cheerful and not gloomy, and that above everything else I prefer something real but saturated with the feeling and imagination of the artist." Why Stevens never went to Europe is something of a mystery—lots of talk about having to stay home owing to Mrs. Stevens's dahlias—but it's far from clear that the Europe of his imagining wasn't much more vivid than any actual Europe could have been.

The great century of travel for Americans was the nineteenth. You had to have money, though it could apparently be done without scads of it. In the nineteenth century Europe was more open, less tumultuous, everyone wasn't rushing about as if waiting for the twenty-four-second shot-clock to go off. With the exceptions only of Thoreau, Whitman, and Emily Dickinson, all the important American writers traveled abroad. Some went farther than others: Charles Eliot Norton, looking after his family's shipping interests, spent more than a year in India. Most Americans traveled to widen their culture among the monuments of Europe and the (presumably) more refined manners of the English, French, and Italian superior classes. "It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of traveling... retains its fascination for all educated Americans," wrote Emerson, whose best book, *English Traits*, came out of his stay in England.

But no American got more—aesthetically, morally, spiritually—out of his

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Bathers in Santa Monica, California, c. 1890.

travels than Henry James, who at various times referred to himself as "the passionate pilgrim," "the visionary traveler," and "the sentimental tourist." Born in 1843 to a traveling family, James first went abroad at the age of six months and, in later years, claimed to have a memory even from that age "of the admirable aspect of the Place and Colonne Vendôme." The Jameses returned to Europe when Henry was twelve and again when he was seventeen; and they did not, you may be sure, go on the fourteen-day whirlwind tour but stayed for two or three years each time. In 1869, at the age of twenty-six, Henry James took up permanent residence there.

The international subject—of Americans in Europe, but also of Europeans in America—was one of the chief benefits of Henry James's travel experience. He had of course internationalized himself as no other American. T.S. Eliot said that James had turned himself into "a European but of no known country." Europe was, for James, as he himself put it, "ever so many things at once, not only beauty and art and supreme design, but history and fame and power, the world in fine raised to the richest and noblest expression."

He spoke the most perfect French, but finally never quite, as he might say, "appropriated and took possession" of that country. He loved Italy above all European countries, and two of his greatest novels, *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Wings of the Dove*, owe much of their power to their tapestried Italian settings. A character touring Italy in one of his stories, upon remarking regretfully about not being Catholic to another character, says, "What a different thing this visiting of churches would be for us, if we occasionally felt the prompting to fall to our knees."

But it was in England that Henry James settled, and of England that in his journal he wrote: "*J'y suis absolument comme chez moi.*" In the same journal entry, after cataloging all that is wretched about London—"the fogs, the smoke, the dirt, the darkness, the wet, the distances, the ugliness, the brutal size of the place, the horrible numerosity of society, the sense in which all this senseless bigness is fatal to amenity"—he ends by concluding that for him "London is on the whole the most possible form of life." In 1915, with England at war, the year before his death, as a sign of his deep spiritual allegiance to the country, he became an English citizen.

Yet, for all Henry James's cosmopolitanism, when he came to write his story "The Great Good Place," that place, though never pinned down geographically turned out to be not "that happy land—far, far away," but "in the beloved British Islands and so near as we are to Bradford." The place turns out to be great and good because in it "The Great Want [is] Met." The great want is for liberty, tranquility, comfort, simplification. The burden of success may be set down there, and also the weight of failure. It is likened to a retreat, but with the exercises of piety subtracted. Taste everywhere is perfect; servants, though always inconspicuous, are omnicompetent; it is also likened to a club, but without any newspapers or bores about. One's fellow guests are all exquisitely simpatico. It extracted all the things in modern life it "was such rapture to be without."

The Great Good Place replenishes the inner life, and contains so many of the Jamesian grace notes: "the cool plash [of the fountain] in the stillness," "the broad cloister of peace or some garden-nook where the air was light, a special glimpse of beauty or reminder of felicity seemed, in passing to hover and linger." It is a place where the hero of the story "could read and write; there, above all, he could do nothing—he could live."

You will not be shocked, I suspect, to learn that the place, great and good though it is so designated, doesn't exist, either in life or even in the story itself. The Great Good Place is the dream of the story's greatly overworked hero, who feels himself at the outset weighted down and all but plowed under by the trivialities of existence at the level of success, when one is most vulnerable to losing one's sense of life's point and purpose.

I have given up on discovering any Great Good Place for me. I am fairly convinced that, should I find anything resembling such a place, I am likely to ask if there is a fax machine nearby and worry about my phone calls, mail, and e-mail. I am a man who always thought he desired serenity but (to apply some roller-coaster-like prepositions here) when you come right down to it, I am not really up to it.

Tourism is said to be a condition of moral rest, but I have never quite found it so. Tourism chiefly makes me edgy, morally uncomfortable. Might it be that the loss of a taste for travel is the price paid by people who love their work too much? I begin to see that, for me, such serenity as is available won't come with a background of blue water and palm trees, mountains shimmering majestically in the distance. It probably won't come at all. Anywhere you go, an old saying has it, there you are. And here I am. With so many miles on me already, I am terribly late in making this discovery. ♦

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Tipping Point

Tip O'Neill and the end of the Democratic era.

BY ALVIN S. FELZENBERG

Anyone who thinks the writing of biographies a declining art will be buoyed by the appearance of John Aloysius Farrell's monumental study of legendary Democratic Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill. In *Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century*, Farrell attempts, as his title suggests, both to tell the story of an important and colorful political figure and to recapture the spirit of the times in which he made his mark.

Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century
A Biography
by John Aloysius Farrell
Little Brown, 784 pp., $29.95

He succeeds at both tasks remarkably well, and he tells his tale with a vividness that enables his readers almost to see O'Neill work the ethnic wards of Boston and Cambridge, and to hear the roar of rallies and the clacking of chips at the speaker's poker table.

O'Neill rose to power and prominence as the Democratic party was consolidating its majority status, bolstered by the votes of a growing middle class that saw itself as the beneficiary of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. When he left public life a half century later, the prevailing liberal consensus was giving way to a dynamic conservatism that advocated tax cuts and economic growth, while the Democratic party was disintegrating into a collection of liberal elites, obsessed with special pleading and group rights.

Even by the time he became speaker of the House in 1977, O'Neill was fighting a rear-guard action. Farrell sees as his most lasting achievement his "holding the bridge" against Reaganite assaults. In a rare but deliberate Churchillian pose, O'Neill proclaimed, "I did not become Speaker of the House to dismantle the programs that I fought for all my life, or the philosophy I believe in." Farrell credits Reagan with changing public expectations about the role of the federal government, curbing its expansion, seeing the potential for free trade and deregulation, and winning the Cold War. O'Neill's lasting legacy, Farrell says, was shifting the terms of the debate from abolishing programs to scaling them back.

But is this right? Although he concedes that the scare tactics O'Neill used to achieve his ends more than bordered on the demagogic ("they want to abolish Social Security," "they want to kill Medicare"), Farrell never disagrees with O'Neill's allegations about Reagan. As it happens, Reagan always insisted that his primary targets were the excesses of the Great Society, rather than the middle-class entitlements of the New Deal. The examples Farrell provides to suggest otherwise—reduced payments to early retirees and abolition of minimum monthly payments to those not enrolled in the Social Security system—were hardly of the kind that warranted the personal invective O'Neill injected into a policy dispute.

O'Neill proclaimed Reagan "cold and mean," said he had "ice water for blood," called him a "tightwad" and an "Ebenezer Scrooge," and said he had "no concern for the little man in America." Seldom does Farrell assess the role O'Neill played in producing the incivility much of contemporary Washington now decries. Nor does he contemplate what long-term effects the speaker's disproportionate attacks against an increasingly popular president had on the electoral prospects of the Democratic party. Indeed, O'Neill, by his actions, probably put into greater jeopardy the program he most cherished. Ohio Democratic representative Lud Ashley, as Farrell notes, thought O'Neill had made it impossible for either party to trust its opposition ever again on matters pertaining to Social Security.

Even O'Neill's genuine achievements proved short lived. The ethical laxities, sense of personal entitlement, corruption, and imperial manner in which the Democrats governed the House during O'Neill's years helped produce the backlash that enabled the "Gingrich revolutionaries" O'Neill so detested to break a forty-year reign of Democratic control.

Prone though Farrell is to present O'Neill in the best possible light and give him the benefit of every possible doubt, one of the strengths of *Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century* is that it provides the evidence to allow the reader to draw other conclusions. O'Neill once said of Reagan, "He and I both came from the same side of the railroad tracks. I never forgot from where I came. He kind of forgot." Farrell believes sentiments like these governed most of O'Neill's actions as a public figure. A careful reading of his narrative suggests otherwise.

The youngest of four children, O'Neill was born December 9, 1912 in a working-class neighborhood in Cambridge. Farrell describes his childhood as "plain but comfortable." O'Neill's father, a city employee and local politician, was never out of work, even during the Great Depression, and O'Neill, though he professed resentment even into old age at having to cut lawns at Harvard Yard, graduated from Boston College at a time when one of ten men his age went to college.

Failing in his race for the Cambridge City Council in 1935, O'Neill won a seat in the state legislature a year later. A party regular, he took an independent line when he opposed loyalty oaths for teachers. Like his later opposition to the Vietnam war, this may have been more an act of expediency than courage—in a

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district that housed several universities. In 1948, at the behest of his mentor, Representative John McCormack, O'Neill masterminded the campaign that won the Democrats control of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for the first time in that state's history. Victory made him the first Democrat and the first Catholic ever to serve as Speaker. Three issues Democrats rode into office that year were housing for veterans, increased power to labor unions, and opposition to birth control.

At the early stages of his career, O'Neill, a devout Catholic, awarded much weight to his religious convictions and the policy positions of the Church hierarchy. He went so far as to block President Kennedy's federal aid to education initiative because it had exempted parochial schools. A decade later, he was pressuring fellow Catholics from working-class constituencies to toe the new party line in favor of abortion. He ventured even farther when he enthusiastically backed compulsory school busing, reversed himself on parochial school aid, and opposed what would later go by the name "school choice."

O'Neill's early opposition to Vietnam facilitated his rise up the ranks of the House leadership. He made himself the bridge between southern committee chairmen and party reformers. He ingratiated himself with the latter through innovations like open teller voting and used their support to maximize the powers of the House leadership at the expense of committee fiefdoms.

As House majority leader, O'Neill was among the first to sense that Nixon would not survive Watergate. What most perturbed him about the scandal was not the illegalities but the fact that Nixon crossed an established political boundary by poaching Democratic contributors. Assuming the public stance of a "disinterested" observer, O'Neill worked feverishly behind the scenes and through the press to create an air of inevitability about Nixon's impeachment. Farrell convincingly portrays him as the "stage manager" of the entire process.

Elected speaker just before Jimmy Carter's inauguration as president, O'Neill was poised to follow in the footsteps of Rayburn and McCormack by passing a Democratic president's activist agenda. Frustrated at Carter's fiscal restraint and budgetary caution, he found his true calling as the public face of a despondent Democratic party determined to resist the "Reagan revolution." In that role, O'Neill showed himself more a tactician than a visionary. He had made a career of finding the center of gravity within his party and maneuvering himself into a position where he could enforce the prevailing orthodoxy.

Reagan was just the reverse. For him, high office was a means through which to enact his deeply held beliefs. He obtained his opportunity not by accommodating his views to the mainstream of his party but by supplanting that mainstream through his powers of persuasion, charm, and organization. "We are too great a nation to limit ourselves to small dreams," Reagan proclaimed. One of his dreams was to lighten burdens he believed prevented people living in circumstances similar to those he had experienced from getting ahead, as he had.

"We didn't live on the wrong side of the railroad tracks, but we lived so close to them we could hear the whistle real loud," Reagan once snapped at O'Neill's attacks. "I think it is sheer demagoguery to pretend that this economic program which we've submitted is not aimed at helping the great cross-section of people in this country that have been burdened for too long by big government and high taxes."

Having escaped the poverty of his youth, Reagan made sure the door behind him stayed open. Of the two determined Irish Americans who grace Farrell's pages, Ronald Reagan was the one who best remembered where he came from. ♦

Undead, Unwhite, Unmale

The varieties of conservative experience.

BY MATTHEW ROSE

The state of race politics and current academic fashion apparently requires that there be a book on "multicultural conservatism." But does it have to be jargony, confused, uneven, and done by an effusive anti-conservative?

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now?
Multicultural Conservatism in America
by Angela D. Dillard
NYU Press, 288 pp., $26.95

In *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now?*, Angela Dillard, a young professor of history at New York University, explores the curious and often surprising roles minorities have played as foils and philosophers for the conservative movement. They're a group Dillard is uncomfortable with, holding, as they do, "ideologies" that she does not "particularly like." Indeed, she can't overcome her astonishment at their existence, "given the extent to which the conservative tradition was shaped by racialist and outright racist doctrines, by heterosexual-patriarchal notions of gender and family, and by xenophobic influence."

But Dillard, to her credit, does her reluctant best to approach minority conservatives with a measure of even-handedness. She nervously suspects that such black conservatives as Clarence

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Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier, Katharine Hepburn, and Katharine Houghton in Stanley Kramer's Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? *(1967)*

Thomas and Shelby Steele have exposed the hidebound racial orthodoxy of the Left. These figures, we are told, borrow heavily from the fundamental idea of neoconservatism: The nettlesome problems of justice and inequality have little to do with racial or sexual discrimination when compared with the larger moral problems of culture. Theirs is a philosophy "dominated by a supposed consensus around the desirability of assimilation, not as members of an artificially contrived minority but as individuals, as citizens, as Americans."

Dillard shrewdly realizes the subversive effect brown, black, and lavender conservatives have on the Left's favorite metaphysical claim: the notion that truth is a function of historical, racial, and sexual identity. Add to that the claim that the personal is the political, and you have a world in which things like race and gender ought to have irreversible and definite political meanings. The existence of Clarence Thomas is a metaphysical self-contradiction.

In response, conservatism embraces a strategy of assimilation guided by individualism and self-reliance. Its minority representatives are *identity dissidents* who refuse to accept the political identities assigned to them.

For Dillard, the danger is that they are successfully positioning themselves as the true heirs of the civil-rights movement's insistence that civil society should be a color-blind place where citizens meet as equals in the eyes of the law, a place "decontaminated" by the petty issues of skin color, gender, and sexual preference. Jorge Amselle of the Center for Equal Opportunity speaks for the lot of them: "You don't cure the problem of people treating each other differently because of race by having government treat people differently because of race. If you want a color-blind society, you have to have a color-blind public policy."

Dillard proves incapable of entertaining an idea not filtered through the categories of hegemony, racism, and patriarchy, and her own politics remain undisturbed throughout. But what she lacks in argument she begins to make up for by unearthing conservative traditions and historical figures in minority cultures. Some of her characters are familiar, but others are quite obscure, and she wisely focuses her most sustained attention on stories and people that have received little attention.

Here we learn about near-forgotten people like Claude McKay, part of the cadre of writers associated with the Harlem Renaissance, who mounted vociferous attacks against Communists and "totalitarian liberals" and later entered the Roman Catholic Church, "the greatest political organization of the world." Or the black reactionary George Schuyler, an anti-Communist and John Birch Society member, who helped found the Conservative Political Union in New York. We learn too about contemporary activists such as Elizabeth Wright, with her black conservative newsletter *Issues and Views*, and the odd figure of Susan Au Allen, who recommends fighting crime with the "Asian techniques of shame" that humiliate criminals by strapping them to car hoods.

Dillard does grudgingly admit that multicultural conservatives are not being manipulated (no "false consciousness," we are blessedly told), and concedes that they are to be taken with the utmost seriousness—an intelligent and savvy movement no longer to be considered, as Amiri Baraka put it, "pods growing in the cellars of our politics." In the end, however, she offers only the now-shopworn complaint that minority conservatives champion a politics that is destructive to the interest of minority, working-class, and poor people. Dillard's only theoretical thrust is the claim that the authority of multicultural conservatives is derived from the "identities" they consider nonessential to politics—and therefore those "identities" must be considered essential to politics.

The problem with Dillard's book, despite its historical legwork, is plainly evident in her cumbersome term "multicultural conservative." The idea for *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now?* began, Dillard admits in the preface, "as something of a joke during a dinner party." She never quite transcends that old, dust-gathering genre of liberal books about conservatism, the subtitle of all of which could be "I Can't Believe They Really Believe This Stuff!"

What Dillard doesn't understand, it must be said, is that conservatism has never been and can never be "multicultural" in the Left's sense of the term, which is only a thinly disguised cultural relativism and anti-Western prejudice. Conservatism claims the universal values that made the West the political, moral, scientific, and economic leader of the world—and these are the traditions multiculturalism aims at detonating. And that, of course, is the reason that even a much better book on this topic must fail. A "multicultural conservative," in Dillard's sense, would be a very strange creature indeed. ♦

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Parody

The New York Times

Jeffords Leaves Vermont for New Hampshire; Believed State Drifting "Too Far West"

By ADAM CLYMER

WASHINGTON, July 30—In a move that rocked Washington, Senator James M. Jeffords has decided to leave the Vermont state delegation and join the New Hampshire delegation, giving that state three senators and unprecedented power in the upper chamber. "It's something that I've been thinking about for twenty years," the flinty New England senator declared, "and when I saw that Vermont was now bordering New York, whereas New Hampshire borders Maine, my conscience dictated I make the switch. Plus I'm saving a ton of dough in taxes."

New Hampshirites praised Jeffords's switch as an act of courage, while political experts said that the flinty senator would not be punished for his move. "If there's one thing we appreciate up here in New England, it's rank opportunism," one observer said.

The move comes at the end of a tumultuous month for the independent-minded flinty New Englander. Less than 48 hours before switching states, Jeffords had abandoned the Natural Law Party for the French Rally for the Republic Party, his ninth party switch in a fortnight. "I was disturbed by the upward drift of the Natural Law Party, and my conscience could not allow me to continue any affiliation," the flinty politician said after a levitation session with the Maharishi.

The Natural Law Party defection followed a noisy break with the Socialist Workers Party, which followed a defection from the Democratic Farmer Labor Party, which in turn followed a short stint as the only senator from the Reform Party. Senator Jeffords said he felt most at home as a member of the Whig Party, but his conscience forced him to leave that party after he discovered that it no longer existed. His earlier defection from the Israeli Shas Party caused a major crisis in the Knesset and brought down the government of Ariel Sharon. His break with Shas was precipitated by tension with leaders of the Hasidic movement. Jeffords kept breaking with different synagogues, thereby screwing up their efforts to get minyans.

The irony is that the flinty New England senator had been a member of a single party, the Republican Party, for several decades, until he discovered that everyone in that party was morally inferior to himself. He initially decided to vote with the Democrats, and not coincidentally was given a major chairmanship, but he broke with the Democratic Party after its leaders would not endorse him for the presidency of the National Organization for Women. "Ever since I was a little boy, I've felt that I was actually the president of NOW trapped in a flinty New Englander's body."

Continued on Page A8

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JUNE 11, 2001

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The SAT: Blaming the Messenger

This is the corrected version** of E. D. Hirsch's essay that appeared [illegible] in the Weekly* **Standard.** ***The printed essay** inadvertently added a concluding paragraph not written by Professor Hirsch, in **support of a free-market** approach to education reform—an approach that Professor Hirsch in fact regards* ***as unpromising.

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Opponents of the SAT say we don't know what it measures and hint darkly that it smacks of discredited IQ testing. Decades ago, the distinguished psychometrician John Carroll stated, correctly, that the verbal SAT is an "advanced vocabulary test." At a lower level so are other standardized tests in common use such as the verbal portions of the Stanford 9, the ITBS, the CTBS, and, most significant of all, the well-studied AFQT, taken by those who enter military service. The verbal portions of these tests are highly correlated with one another and with real-world competencies in the armed forces, in college, and in the workplace.

Critics of the SAT concede that it was devised to ensure fairness in admission to elite colleges but that it has become unfair to able students who do not perform well on fill-in-the-bubble tests, to those who belong to ethnic groups and so are on uneasy terms with the cultural assumptions of the verbal SAT, and to those whose parents are not rich enough to pay for the expensive SAT courses that claim to raise scores. The result has been ethnically and racially unrepresentative admission to top universities. These sins against equity are compounded by sins against proper educational goals. Instead of prodding students to think about the civil rights movement or Shakespeare's plays, schools now run cram courses to improve performance on standardized tests.

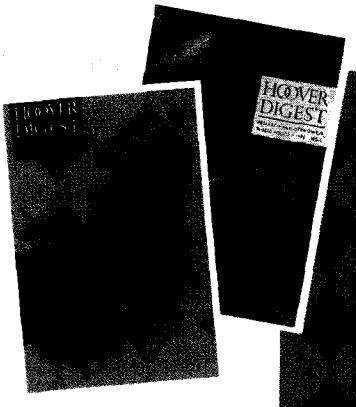
These are reasonable criticisms, but they are accompanied by vague recommendations for better tests that can disclose deeper skills than those measured by the verbal SAT, or for tests that are based on the school curriculum. Yet **no test of "alternative" skills has proved to be fair and valid.** The idea of using tests based on the school curriculum is more promising, but so far no statewide curriculum is specific enough to permit curriculum-based tests that are fair. Until fair and valid curriculum-based tests are developed, it is irresponsible to abandon a test like the SAT that is valid and fair.

I sympathize with the social motives behind this intellectual irresponsibility. I too want able disadvantaged students to have the opportunity to attend top colleges. But SAT critics have chosen the wrong target. The right target is K–12 public education. The most promising alternative to the SAT—curriculum-based tests—are themselves ultimately means for improving scores on the SAT by improving the underlying vocabulary knowledge that the SAT measures. Statewide curriculum-based tests recently introduced in Virginia have already produced a rise in SAT-style verbal tests.

So I agree that curriculum-based tests offer the most promising way for schools to overcome inequities created by class and caste. But **the virtues of curriculum-based tests in no way invalidate the verbal SAT** or similar tests, which are currently the only good instruments to calibrate the accuracy of curriculum-based tests that are offered as alternatives. If school-based tests do not produce rises in the verbal SAT, then something is wrong with the tests and the schools. Blaming the SAT is a short-sighted way of taking the heat off the public schools to provide genuine equality of educational opportunity.

— E. D. Hirsch Jr.

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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